UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

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S/1998/220*
12 March 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 11 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter from His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, expressing his support for your wise management and diplomatic efforts aimed at containing the crisis with Iraq, which led to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, thus enhancing the role and credibility of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Mohammad J. SAMHAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Annex

Letter dated 11 March 1998 from the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Secretary-General

Allow me, first of all, to express the appreciation and satisfaction of the United Arab Emirates following your success in concluding an agreement with the Iraqi Government concerning Iraq's observance of the Security Council resolutions relating to the work of the Commission responsible for the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

The United Arab Emirates placed on record its position regarding the agreement when His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, made the following statement: "We issued an appeal for the conclusion of this agreement and we stated that we were deeply committed to its conclusion, since we rejected military intervention. Likewise, we issued an appeal for full advantage to be taken of the diplomatic solution." His Highness then thanked and praised you for the valuable efforts you are continuing to make, and expressed the hope that the inspection teams would carry out their tasks as quickly as possible so as to pave the way for the lifting of the sanctions imposed on our brothers and sisters in Iraq.

The agreement between the United Nations and Iraq is an achievement likely to enhance the role and credibility of the United Nations, and to reaffirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq by protecting it from third-party interference in its internal affairs.

The United Arab Emirates takes this opportunity to reiterate its appeal for the international rule of law to prevail in all parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East, a region that continues to experience Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and other Arab territories. In this connection, we hope that tangible expression will be given to the international rule of law in accordance with the principles and rules underlying the peace process and the related agreements concluded between the parties concerned.

In conclusion, we can only convey to you our thanks and appreciation, and reaffirm that, without your wise management of the crisis and your indefatigable efforts to overcome all the obstacles, we would not have achieved this agreement, which has spared the region a devastating war and has created a climate of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence in keeping with the aspirations of our State and our people.

(Signed) Hamdan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 11 MARCH 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached letter dated 9 March 1998 which I have received from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee established pursuant to the mandate of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) (see annex).

Attached to the letter is the report of the Member States participating in MISAB, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1152 (1998) of 5 February 1998. I should be grateful if you would bring the letter and its enclosure to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

[Original: French]

Letter dated 9 March 1998 from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report covering the period from 3 February to 10 March 1998, requested by the Security Council in paragraph 10 of its resolution 1152 (1998) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic.

(Signed) Gen. Amadou Toumani TOURÉ
Chairman of the International
Monitoring Committee

Appendix

[Original: French]

Report to the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1152 (1998) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic

(10 March 1998)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 5 February 1998, the Security Council unanimously adopted its resolution 1152 (1998), which was a continuation of its earlier resolution 1136 (1997). In paragraph 10 of its resolution 1152 (1998), the Council requested the Member States participating in the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB), namely, the International Monitoring Committee for the Follow-up of the Bangui Agreements, which represents them, to provide a report to the Security Council through the Secretary-General before 16 March 1998.

2. This report describes the developments in the situation in the Central African Republic during the period from 3 February to 10 March 1998.

II. POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

3. The International Monitoring Committee for the Follow-up of the Bangui Agreements, chaired by General Amadou Toumani Touré, is the body that directs the actions of MISAB, since it receives the necessary political guidance directly from the heads of State concerned, and especially from the President of the Gabonese Republic, who is Chairman of the International Mediation Committee.

4. MISAB is under the patronage of President El Hadj Omar Bongo of the Gabon Republic, senior head of State of the International Mediation Committee. It is under the political authority of General Amadou Toumani Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee.

III. LOGISTICAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL MONITORING COMMITTEE

5. It should be noted that, since its establishment by the heads of the States members of the International Mediation Committee, the International Monitoring Committee has received logistical and technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

IV. LOGISTICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE MISSION

6. As indicated in the previous reports, MISAB receives logistical support from the participating States, France and the Government of the Central African Republic. It also received support previously from the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

7. The International Monitoring Committee welcomes the imminent establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping force in the Central African Republic to strengthen the peace that has been restored with the involvement and support of the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB. While not wishing to prejudge the mission to be entrusted to the peacekeeping force, the Committee suggests that its mandate include the implementation of those provisions of the Bangui Agreements that have not yet been implemented.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BANGUI AGREEMENTS

8. The Bangui Agreements of 25 January 1997, the outcome of strenuous efforts of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue, endorsed and chaired by General Amadou Toumani Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee, constitute the indispensable basis for the establishment and strengthening of peace and the achievement of national reconciliation, a necessary stage in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Central African Republic.

9. The implementation of these Agreements was planned in accordance with a timetable established by the International Monitoring Committee and accepted by all. However, it must be acknowledged that there has been some delay in the full implementation of certain provisions deemed important by one or another of the parties. After the many incidents that have lined the perilous path of the national reconciliation process, implementation of the main headings in the timetable established by the Committee is currently proceeding at a somewhat faster pace.

10. The Forum to Evaluate the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements, held on 19 February 1998, noted the following:

(a) A number of major provisions have been implemented in their entirety; these provisions concern:

- Deployment of an inter-African force;
- Formation of a government of national union;
- Abandonment of the judicial enforcement of the parliamentary audit;
- Amnesty covering offences in the context of the third rebellion;

- Certain disarmament issues (reintegration of the soldiers who took part in the rebellion into the Central African armed forces, security measures and resumption of short-wave broadcasts by Radio Centrafricaine);

- Situation of former heads of State (Act No. 97/012 of 31 October 1997 has been followed by Implementation Decree No. 98.038 of 4 March 1998);

- Pacification measures, especially security conditions in educational institutions and the revision of the 1996/97 school calendar;

- Measures to ensure peace and development;

- Preliminary Agreement on a National Reconciliation Pact.

The provision concerning the holding of a national reconciliation conference, which on 19 February 1998 was considered to be in the process of implementation, should now be included among the provisions that have been implemented, following the memorable conference held from 26 February to 5 March 1998.

(b) Other provisions are in an advanced stage of implementation; these provisions concern:

- The Electoral Code and the Independent Joint Electoral Commission (the relevant bill, which was considered for the first time at a special session of the National Assembly in February, will probably be adopted during the National Assembly's regular session, which began on 9 March 1998);

- The Press Code and the National Council for Radio and Television (the relevant bills will be considered during this first session of the National Assembly);

- Recommendations of the General Meeting on National Defence;

- Procedures for appointment to the University of Bangui.

(c) Certain provisions implementation of which has begun and will continue over a more or less extended period; these provisions concern:

- Implementation of the Political Agreement Protocol and the Minimum Standards Programme;

- Respect for the Constitution and constitutional legality, for the institutions, laws and regulations of the Republic, and for human rights;

- National reconciliation with its two components: evaluation of the damage caused by the various crises and compensation of the victims;

- Good governance.

(d) Certain other provisions have not yet begun to be implemented; these provisions concern:

- Recommendations of the General Meeting on Youth;
- Amendment of the codes of criminal procedure;
- Streamlining of the Office of the President of the Republic;
- Revision of certain articles of the Constitution;
- Negotiation of a social contract with trade unions.

11. It must be stressed that the thorny problem of arrears of wages and salaries, pensions and scholarships unfortunately falls into the category of measures that have not yet been implemented owing to the precarious state of the national economy and public finance.

12. Following an assessment of all the provisions that have not yet been implemented or have been implemented only in part, a three-stage plan of action (short, medium and long term) was prepared and submitted to the National Reconciliation Conference, which adopted the plan with a number of slight amendments.

13. More specifically, we are pleased to report that all the headings in the timetable established by the International Monitoring Committee have been implemented either entirely or in part (at an advanced stage).

14. In particular, the heading concerning disarmament is still being implemented, even if the recovery of arms is proceeding at a slower pace than at the outset. The disarmament operations in Bangui took place in accordance with methodology described in the previous reports. To date, the results have been as follows:

(a) Heavy weapons: 92.91 per cent;

(b) Light weapons: 57.47 per cent;

(c) Munitions of various types: 464,604 units;

(d) Explosives and detonators: 26,714 units.

15. Considering the various factors mentioned in the previous reports, it is easy to understand why the recovery of all light weapons remains uncertain in spite of all the means and strategies employed. While some hope remains for the successful continuation of disarmament operations both in Bangui and in remote areas of the country, it would be unrealistic to believe that the recovery of light weapons will be as extensive as that of heavy weapons.

16. In the light of the various unconfirmed rumours, which have given rise to suspicion and a sort of psychosis, to the effect that a quantity of weapons difficult to estimate was imported into the country on various dates, the

International Monitoring Committee and MISAB believe that the disarmament operations are not yet finished, and are continuing to devote painstaking and patient attention to them.

17. It is clear that the accounts relating to weapons recovery pertain only to arms and munitions taken from the State armouries. This is why the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB have remained vigilant and have not ignored any information provided to them concerning weapons caches.

18. The provision concerning the parliamentary audit has had varying degrees of success, and an act was finally adopted by the National Assembly on 13 February 1998 and promulgated as Act No. 98.003 on the same day by the President of the Republic.

19. With regard to the provision on the implementation of the recommendations of the General Meeting on National Defence, the Commission on the Restructuring of the Defence and Security Forces, chaired by the Minister of Defence under the supervision of the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee, filed its report on 29 January 1998. The Commission provides the framework in which solutions acceptable to all can be worked out for the main recommendations in dispute. These are the recommendations relating to the "dissolution" of the Section d'enquête, de recherche et de la documentation (Survey, Research and Documentation Section) and the Centre national de recherche et d'investigation (National Research and Investigation Centre) and the recommendation relating to the "reduction of the staff" of the Presidential Guard. The Commission on the Restructuring of the Defence and Security Forces has decided on:

(a) Dissolution of the Section d'enquête, de recherche et de la documentation and the assignment of its members to their original units;

(b) Dissolution of the Centre national de recherche et d'investigation;

(c) Establishment of a documentation bureau to take charge of national security;

(d) Strict implementation of Presidential Decree No. 94/87 of 8 March 1994 concerning the Presidential Guard, which conferred on the Guard functions accepted by all (excluding abuses, which were noted and censured), and, consequently, restriction of the number of members of that unit.

20. On 4 March 1998, the President of the Republic signed decrees dealing with the four above-mentioned measures. However, it must be acknowledged that certain provisions differ from the proposals submitted by the Commission on the Restructuring of the Defence and Security Forces, in particular with regard to the presence in the provinces of a battalion of the new Force spéciale pour la défense des institutions républicaines (Special Force for the Defence of Republican Institutions) and the inclusion of an investigatory police unit in the Direction générale de la documentation d'État (Directorate-General for State Documentation) attached to the Office of the President of the Republic.

21. The National Reconciliation Conference finally took place from 26 February to 5 March 1998. It was opened by President Patassé, with the participation of representatives from all components of Central African society. A few incidents occurred but were quickly brought under control thanks to the vigilance of the International Monitoring Committee and the real desire of the majority of the Central African people to achieve national reconciliation. Thus, the suspension declared by the delegates of the Groupe des onze partis politiques de l'opposition (Group of Eleven), the Mouvement pour la démocratie et le développement (Movement for Democracy and Development) and the Union des syndicats des travailleurs centrafricains (Union of Trade Unions of Central African Workers) was of short duration.

22. At the technical level, the work of the Conference, chaired by Reverend Isaac Zokoé, Dean of the Bangui School of Theology, proceeded smoothly thanks to the methodical and meticulous preparation by the Preparatory Committee headed by Mr. Laurent Gomina-Pampali, Minister for Human Rights and Promotion of Democratic Culture and National Reconciliation, with the political support of the International Monitoring Committee and financing from UNDP.

23. After six days of work, the National Reconciliation Conference adopted a number of important resolutions and decisions the most important of which are those relating to the National Reconciliation Pact and its annexes (Plan of Action for the effective implementation of the provisions of the Bangui Agreements that have not yet been implemented and the establishment of the Monitoring and Arbitration Committee).

24. Other resolutions and recommendations should also be mentioned:

(a) Recommendation on regionalization and decentralization;

(b) Recommendation on the restoration of the authority of traditional leaders;

(c) Recommendation on the implementation of the Family Code;

(d) Recommendation on the implementation of the conclusions of the General Meeting on Youth;

(e) Recommendation on the implementation of the National Population Policy;

(f) Recommendation on the organization of the General Meeting on Economy and Finance;

(g) Recommendation on foreign relations;

(h) Recommendation on the preparation and implementation of a national plan of action to combat poverty;

(i) Recommendation on respect for democratic rules;

(j) Resolution on the economic and social situation;

(k) Resolution on the administrative situation;

(l) Resolution on national union;

(m) Resolution on democratic culture;

(n) Resolution on the political situation;

(o) Resolution on an agreement between the Central African Republic and the Bretton Woods institutions;

(p) Resolution on the measures to be taken to compensate the victims of the rebellions;

(q) Resolution on the proclamation of 5 March as National Day of Reconciliation.

25. The Conference also took note of three declarations and two motions to strengthen the spirit of reconciliation among all components of the nation. As Mr. Laurent Gomina-Pampali, General Rapporteur of the Conference, concluded:

> "The important results that have been achieved are a result of the physical, moral and political contributions of all components of the Central African nation during the six days of work. These results involve all components. Their effective implementation is the condition sine qua non for the country's return to peace and unity, and its ability to ensure sustainable human development."

26. The closing meeting was held on 5 March 1998 under the chairmanship of His Excellency President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, and was attended by President Idriss Deby of Chad, President Alpha Oumar Konaré of Mali, President Laurent Désiré Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of the Sudan, General Amadou Toumani Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee, representatives of the heads of State of Senegal, Burkina Faso, Togo, Uganda and Cameroon, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations for Political Affairs, representatives of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), the Secretary-General of the French-Speaking Communities (Francophonie) and the Administrator of UNDP.

27. After listening to the messages of the Secretary-General of the French-Speaking Communities, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the Director-General of UNESCO, the Administrator of UNDP and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the General Rapporteur of the Conference presented the results of the work of the Conference, the success of which justified the deep satisfaction of all participants.

28. Three important statements, full of lessons of wisdom, tolerance, acceptance of the right to be different, love of one's neighbour, national solidarity and peaceful coexistence among all of the country's social strata and

ethnic groups marked the conclusion of this great meeting, which will be a milestone in the history of the Central African Republic:

(a) Statement by General Amadou Toumani Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee;

(b) Statement by Mr. Ange Félix Patassé, President of the Central African Republic, Head of State;

(c) Statement by El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic, Chairman of the International Mediation Committee.

29. One concern was widely shared by the participants in the National Reconciliation Conference, namely, the need to create a climate conducive to national reconciliation. Necessary and useful conditions for the creation of such a climate include:

(a) Regular payment of wages and salaries;

(b) Full implementation of the various provisions of the Bangui Agreements;

(c) Vigorous measures to ensure economic recovery (including an agreement with the Bretton Woods institutions);

(d) Launching of initiatives to find a solution to the problems of the victims of the rebellions.

30. Given the excellent results of the National Reconciliation Conference, it is to be hoped that the situation will progressively improve. One of the most significant indications of the beginning of the long-awaited détente was the understanding, reached on 3 March 1998 through the good offices of the International Monitoring Committee, between the Minister of the Interior, General François Ndjadder-Bedaya, and Professor Abel Goumba, acting on behalf of the Group of Eleven. It should be recalled that General Ndjadder had lodged a complaint against the leaders of the Group of Eleven following a statement made by those leaders on 1 July 1997 that the General considered slanderous. This incident jeopardized not only the holding of the Conference but also the entire process of restoring and strengthening peace. As a result of the understanding, General Ndjadder withdrew his complaint, to the relief of all concerned.

VI. COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRAL AFRICAN AUTHORITIES AND THE VARIOUS GROUPS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

31. The International Monitoring Committee remains in permanent contact with all persons active in the country's political and social life during this final stage of the Mission in which the essential measures to be taken to strengthen peace cannot and must not be neglected. The Committee and MISAB must therefore not lower their guard until they are replaced by the proposed United Nations peacekeeping force.

VII. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

32. Everyone in Bangui (the political class, civil society, the military and foreigners) is convinced of the need for the presence after 16 March 1998 of a military and security force that would help consolidate the peace and stimulate the process of national reconciliation. Everyone recognizes that, even though the elections are not an end in themselves, their smooth conduct can only help stabilize the situation.

33. In spite of all the recovery efforts currently in progress, the Central African Republic, where industrial and commercial activities have clearly been in a state of paralysis for several months, is still experiencing difficulties in meeting both its internal obligations (wages and salaries, pensions, scholarships, the functioning of basic social services and of the State apparatus) and its external commitments, in particular the repayment of the arrears due to the Bretton Woods institutions.

34. Moreover, failure to resolve the problem of arrears of wages and salaries, pensions and scholarships accounts for the persistence of a very charged social situation. The main concern of the Central African authorities is therefore to find the resources needed to resolve the problem of seven months' arrears of wages and salaries and several additional months' arrears of pensions and scholarships.

35. The groups of affiliated trade unions, which hitherto have demonstrated a great deal of understanding and moderation given the situation, are beginning to show signs of irritation and impatience.

VIII. DEPLOYMENT OF THE FORCE

36. Brigadier-General Barthélémy Ratanga, recently appointed by President Bongo to replace late Brigadier-General Augustin Mombo-Moukagni, took up his duties on 27 February 1998, becoming the third Commander of MISAB.

37. MISAB is continuing to ensure security in all neighbourhoods of the Central African capital by occupying 20 surveillance posts and is participating in joint security patrols in conjunction with the Central African security and defence forces in all districts of Bangui.

38. Hold-ups, armed robberies and other criminal acts have diminished considerably thanks both to the progress achieved in disarmament and the constant vigilance instituted by the system of joint patrols.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

39. The International Monitoring Committee for the Follow-up of the Bangui Agreements is keenly interested in extending until 15 April 1998 the effect of Security Council resolution 1152 (1998) relating to the mandate of MISAB, as recommended by the Secretary-General. This period will enable the various parties concerned to make all the necessary arrangements for the deployment of a

multinational force during the post-MISAB period in order to ensure the security conditions required for the implementation of essential reforms and the organization of free, democratic and transparent elections.

40. The International Monitoring Committee hopes to continue to enjoy the logistical and technical support of UNDP in order to pursue its twofold mission of ensuring the political direction of MISAB and monitoring the implementation of the Bangui Agreements through continuing mediation until the relevant Security Council decisions have been implemented.

41. In order to avoid any slippage or any risk of a return to square one, which might lead to social disruption, it is urged that all measures should be taken at the appropriate levels, including the level of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to promote greater awareness among States Members of the United Nations, international organizations and financial institutions with a view to providing the necessary assistance to the development of the Central African Republic, as requested by the Security Council in paragraph 9 its resolution 1152 (1998). It is well understood that all these measures will complement the necessary efforts of the Central African authorities. Any contrary approach could jeopardize the opportunity for this country to overcome the crisis once and for all, thus irreparably causing the failure of this original experiment in internal conflict resolution that the current mediation effort in the Central African Republic represents.

42. The International Monitoring Committee is determined to succeed in its mission, which is to satisfy the expectations of the peoples and heads of State of Africa that the Central African crisis will be properly settled, and it will continue to spare no effort in urging all the parties to the Central African crisis to continue to work with wisdom and dignity towards the effective implementation of the Bangui Agreements. This is the price of real and lasting peace.

43. At a meeting that he chaired on Monday, 9 March 1998, and attended by members of the Government and by prefects and mayors from all over the country, His Excellency Mr. Ange Félix Patassé, President of the Republic and Head of State, reiterated his unwavering commitment to respect the National Reconciliation Pact that he signed together with official representatives of the various components of the nation on 5 March 1998.

44. The International Monitoring Committee hopes that the structures that will replace it and MISAB, namely the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations International Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), will make every effort not only to complete the tasks already begun but also to strengthen the peace that has been regained with the invaluable and unforgettable assistance of the countries participating in MISAB, France, UNDP and OAU.

45. The International Monitoring Committee and MISAB are pleased to have made, together with the heads of State of the International Mediation Committee, their very African contribution to the search for solutions to the serious crisis that

nearly rent the heart of Africa. They are grateful to all components of Central African society, particularly official authorities at all levels and officials of political parties and trade unions, for their vital and inspiring cooperation with the mediation team in a spirit of African solidarity and in the higher interests of the Central African Republic.

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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 52/211 B of 19 December 1997, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it every three months during its fifty-second session on the progress of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA). The present report, which covers developments since the submission of the report of the Secretary-General of 14 November 1997 (A/52/682-S/1997/894), is also submitted in response to requests by the Security Council for regular information on the main developments in Afghanistan.

2. On 29 December 1997, Mr. Norbert H. Holl completed his assignment as Head of UNSMA. Mr. James C. Ngobi, Deputy Head of UNSMA, has since that time directed UNSMA activities on the ground as its Acting Head. Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi will continue to serve as my Special Envoy for Afghanistan, while also carrying out other functions for the United Nations at my request from time to time. Together with the Department of Political Affairs, he will continue to oversee and guide the activities of UNSMA, including its coordination of and cooperation in humanitarian and other United Nations activities in Afghanistan. He will also undertake diplomatic initiatives, as appropriate, aimed at bringing peace to Afghanistan. I have asked him to pay special attention to diplomatic contacts with the Governments of countries that have influence with Afghan factions and parties, in particular those with common borders with Afghanistan. Mr. Brahimi is scheduled to visit the region soon to discuss with the Afghan parties and the Governments of the immediate neighbours of Afghanistan the current situation and the prospects for the future.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIAL MISSION

3. As mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/211 B, UNSMA continued its efforts to facilitate national reconciliation and reconstruction in Afghanistan and explored opportunities for bringing the factions together and starting a dialogue. One example of this was the effort by UNSMA to build a political dialogue on the agreements reached by several of the factions to exchange prisoners of war. Unfortunately, this effort was frustrated when disputes arose between the Taliban and General Abdul Rashid Dostum, resulting in the de facto detention of General Dostum's negotiator. The details of the prisoner exchanges are described in section III of the present report.

4. UNSMA held a round of meetings in January and February 1998 with leaders of the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. The purpose was to test the climate for peace talks, either through the Taliban-proposed council of ulema (religious scholars) or through a separate initiative. While both sides stated their willingness to cooperate in establishing an ulema council, two Northern Alliance leaders urged the United Nations to proceed with its own initiative to convene an intra-Afghan meeting at a neutral venue. The developments concerning the ulema proposal are also described in section III.

5. UNSMA made special efforts to broaden its consultations with a wide variety of Afghan and other influential individuals and groups in Pakistan. These consultations included meetings with non-partisan Afghans advancing a number of their own peace proposals, including the organization of a loya jirgah (grand assembly). UNSMA made clear that all serious ideas were welcome to the extent that they could contribute to a peaceful settlement of the country's civil strife.

6. In December 1997 and January 1998, the Special Mission expended considerable time and effort in responding to allegations of human rights violations by the Afghan belligerents, particularly in northern Afghanistan. Since some of these alleged violations had occurred in remote areas of northern and north-western Afghanistan, this took inordinate amounts of time and logistical effort. An UNSMA officer accompanied Mr. Choong-Hyun Paik, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights for Afghanistan, during his mission from 30 November to 13 December 1997 to Afghanistan. Section IV of the present report focuses on the allegations of mass killings and measures taken thus far by the United Nations in response to them.

III. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

7. UNSMA continued to monitor closely the military and political developments in and around Afghanistan throughout the reporting period. The humanitarian situation has been monitored by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan.

A. Military situation

8. The military situation remained stalemated, with occasional flare-ups of fighting along the front lines between the Taliban and the factions belonging to the Northern Alliance. The continued fighting has not produced any significant changes in the front lines, but it has caused further destruction, deaths, injuries and internal displacement of large numbers of people. The predominantly Pushtoon Taliban continued to hold approximately two thirds of the country's territory in the south, south-west and south-east, while the mostly Uzbek, Tajik and Hazara Northern Alliance remained in control of most territories north of the Hindu Kush mountains.

9. On 15 December 1997, a three-pronged Taliban force crossed the then-existing front line near Bala Murghab in the north-western province of Badghis and penetrated into the southern part of Faryab Province, a stronghold of the Northern Alliance to the north-east of Badghis Province. Capturing the predominately Uzbek and Turkmen villages along the invasion routes, the Taliban forces occupied the district capital of Qaisar in southern Faryab for two weeks until they were repulsed at Kezel Kota pass and eventually expelled from the area by forces loyal to General Dostum.

10. Fighting continued in other areas, in particular along the front line 20 to 25 kilometres north of Kabul, where forces of the Taliban and those of Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud regularly exchanged artillery and rocket fire. On 3 and 4 February 1998, after a four-month lull in attacks on the capital, heavy barrages of rockets struck Kabul City and its airport from the north. One rocket narrowly missed a crowded housing area.

11. The two forces also clashed in December and early January in the Tagab district of Kapisa Province to the east of Kabul.

12. The north-eastern province of Kunduz remained under Taliban control, despite repeated attempts by the Northern Alliance to dislodge them. Clashes took place at Bangi, in the eastern part of Kunduz, between Massoud forces and the Taliban, and in Baghlan to the south of Kunduz between the Taliban and forces loyal to General Dostum. On 9 February, Taliban bombing raids hit Taloqan, the capital of Takhar Province to the east of Kunduz, killing 17 persons and damaging the airport.

13. Elsewhere, fighting between the Taliban and the Hezb-i-Wahdat broke out on 20 December at Qarabagh to the south-west of Kabul. The clashes followed the Taliban's blockade against United Nations food shipments from Ghazni to Bamyan and other food-deficit regions in central Afghanistan. The Taliban mounted several air raids on Bamyan in January.

B. Political situation

14. Afghanistan remained in political deadlock throughout the reporting period. Foreign military assistance continued to pour into the country, inhibiting all peacemaking efforts by fuelling the war machines of the Northern Alliance and the Taliban. Despite their rhetorical support for the United Nations and a

negotiated settlement, neither side appeared ready to abandon the military option.

15. War weariness continues to erode support for the war, particularly in rural areas. Both in the Taliban- and the Northern Alliance-controlled areas there were reports of resistance to recruitment for military duty, as well as internal friction resulting from factional rivalry.

16. General Dostum returned from exile in Turkey in September and slowly re-established himself as the leader of the Uzbek Jumbesh Party. This ultimately led General Abdul Malik to flee the country and seek refuge in the Islamic Republic of Iran in December 1997. Tension has continued, however, in Mazar-i-Sharif where the factions of the Northern Alliance partitioned the city into separate control zones. Efforts among the Northern Alliance leaders to resolve their differences have been partially successful.

17. A potential avenue for dialogue between the two sides was the initiation of mutual prisoner-of-war exchanges during November and December 1997. General Dostum started the process in late November with a unilateral release of nearly 200 prisoners from the Sherberghan jail, following his capture of the city from General Malik. Subsequently, other exchanges were initiated and effected with the assistance of UNSMA, at the request of General Dostum's Jumbesh Party, and with the cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Several high-ranking Taliban prisoners, including Mullah Abdul Razzak, former Governor of Herat, were freed or allowed to escape, following General Malik's departure.

18. Unfortunately, however, the prisoner exchanges ran into trouble by the end of December 1997, with each side accusing the other of bad faith. A casualty of this unhappy situation is Mullah Abdul Baqi Turkestani, a representative of General Dostum who played a major part in the prisoner release negotiations with the Taliban only to end up as a detainee himself in Kandahar. UNSMA efforts to secure his release have not been successful so far.

19. However, a new initiative launched by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan revived hopes for a negotiated settlement. During his visit to Tehran for the eighth session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), held from 9 to 11 December, Mr. Sharif met with Northern Alliance President Rabbani. In a well-publicized move, he subsequently invited Mr. Rabbani to visit Islamabad. On 23 December, the Jamiat-i-Islami leader arrived in Pakistan from Mazar-i-Sharif for a week-long visit. Accompanied by representatives of the other four Northern Alliance parties, Mr. Rabbani held a series of talks in Islamabad. However, the Taliban, who apparently opposed the Pakistani initiative, did not attend the meetings or accept the agreement reached between Mr. Sharif and Mr. Rabbani for an intra-Afghan dialogue among political leaders. Instead, they reiterated their own proposal to convene a council of ulema, who would be appointed by both sides. At the end of his stay in Pakistan, Mr. Rabbani announced his agreement to the Taliban-proposed ulema meeting as a first step towards more direct negotiations between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Mr. Rabbani also appealed for a ceasefire to be observed by all sides during the holy month of Ramadan. A Taliban spokesman rejected the offer.

20. On 6 February, the Northern Alliance submitted to the Taliban, through the Government of Pakistan, a list containing the names of 45 ulema. On 12 February, the Taliban, who were yet to produce their own list, declared that the Northern Alliance list was "unacceptable" because some of the people in the list did not qualify as ulema in the view of the Taliban and also because the Northern Alliance had failed to give "an assurance that they will accept to abide by whatever decisions are taken by the ulema meeting".

21. On the regional front, a new spirit of cooperation between Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran on Afghanistan provides a potentially more promising prospect. At the eighth session of OIC in Tehran, Prime Minister Sharif and Iranian President Mohammed Khatami agreed to work together for a peaceful solution to the Afghan conflict. As evidence of such a new spirit of cooperation, the two Governments co-sponsored the OIC resolution on Afghanistan, calling for an end to foreign arms shipments to the belligerent factions, a ceasefire and an intra-Afghan dialogue. The meeting of minds of the two leaders raised hopes that Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran could engage in genuine cooperation to end the long-lasting civil war in Afghanistan. At the OIC summit, Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz of Saudi Arabia exchanged views on Afghanistan with both President Mohammed Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei. Crown Prince Abdullah also met Mr. Rabbani.

22. In my statement at the OIC summit on 9 December, I expressed deep concern about the prolonged civil war in Afghanistan, which had defied repeated international efforts for peace and taken a heavy toll on the Afghan people in terms of unspeakable human suffering. I stressed that any genuine peace process must begin with a complete ceasefire and the cessation of the continued arms supply to Afghanistan, which, together with the inability of Afghan leaders to rise above their narrow factional interests, had rendered diplomatic initiatives virtually irrelevant.

23. My Special Envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, visited Saudi Arabia between 17 and 25 January 1998 for consultations with Saudi officials and the OIC secretariat, as well as with dignitaries visiting the country during the holy month of Ramadan. He met with Crown Prince Abdullah, Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, and Director of Intelligence Prince Turki al-Faisal. On 24 January, the Special Envoy was received by Prime Minister Sharif of Pakistan in Mecca. The Prime Minister explained that his initiative signalled a new Pakistani policy towards Afghanistan and reaffirmed his country's support for the United Nations peacemaking efforts in Afghanistan.

24. While in Saudi Arabia, Mr. Brahimi met Mullah Mohamed Rabbani, Chairman of the Taliban supreme shura in Kabul. He also had talks with OIC Secretary-General Azzedine Laraki on the Afghan situation and discussed ways to coordinate further the efforts of OIC and the United Nations to bring about peace in Afghanistan.

25. Subsequently, I met Prime Minister Sharif on 31 January in Davos, Switzerland, where we exchanged views on Afghanistan. Mr. Sharif reconfirmed Pakistan's support for the United Nations efforts, saying that the United Nations and Pakistan had a common agenda in Afghanistan. I was encouraged by

the Prime Minister's comment that a solution to the conflict resided in a broad-based government and thus a "broad-based dialogue", involving all key actors in Afghanistan.

C. Humanitarian situation

26. The humanitarian situation deteriorated sharply in Bamyan Province, where several hundred thousand people suffered from severe food shortages owing to poor harvests caused by bad weather, a blockade of the Ghazni-Kabul trade route in the south of Bamyan and the lack of supplies coming in from the northern route owing to insecurity and looting. Despite numerous appeals by the United Nations for the blockade to be lifted, at the time of writing of the present report, it remained in place. While the World Food Programme (WFP) was able to distribute some 5,700 tons of locally purchased potatoes to 129,000 of the 160,000 neediest people, broader efforts to supply the region with wheat and other commodities in late autumn and early winter were largely unsuccessful. In December 1997, WFP negotiated an airlift of food supplies of up to 2,500 tons to Bamyan, but was forced to cancel it after delivering less than 10 per cent of the agreed quantity when Taliban authorities started dropping bombs at Bamyan airport and refused to guarantee safe passage of the United Nations chartered aircraft. Winter snow now makes this region inaccessible, and recent reports have indicated the threat of starvation in some of the more isolated areas.

27. The contamination of large areas with landmines and unexploded ordnance continued to be a major hindrance to rehabilitation and development in Afghanistan, as well as a deterrent to the return of refugees. More than 725 square kilometres of land remained contaminated, of which 324 square kilometres were considered high priority for clearance. In addition to building up its mine-awareness training activities, the Mine Action Programme of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan enhanced its mine survey capacity - notably through the increased use of mine dog sets. A potential funding crisis was averted when donors responded positively to the interim appeal launched in December 1997.

28. Between 12 and 24 November 1997, the United Nations fielded an inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan, led by Ms. Angela King, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women. The mission examined the conditions of women in Afghanistan, looked at the contexts within which external assistance was planned and delivered, explored ways in which the international community could address gender concerns in the delivery of aid and proposed indicators which could be used to ensure the appropriate monitoring of assistance activities. The report of the mission offers guidelines for strengthening the role of women in the delivery of assistance. It focuses on two key issues that influence the provision of assistance: the current socio-economic environment and the principle-centred approach to gender that has been mandated by the United Nations, but which has often proven difficult to implement. The report discusses ways in which the principle-centred approach could be put into practice so that assistance can better serve the people of Afghanistan.

29. The second meeting of the Afghanistan Support Group was held in New York on 3 December 1997, chaired by Norway. Representatives from Australia, Canada,

Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America participated in the meeting, as well as representatives from United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. The Group discussed, inter alia, the political and security situation in Afghanistan; the strategic framework and the assistance strategy for Afghanistan (see A/52/536, paras. 50 and 51); human rights, gender and related issues; and drug control. During the meeting, the Afghanistan Support Group endorsed the evolving strategy for Afghanistan, while a proposal to establish a common funding mechanism was deemed premature. The next meeting of the Afghanistan Support Group is scheduled to be held in London in May 1998.

30. On 4 February 1998, an earthquake struck Rustaq district and its surrounding villages in Takhar Province, a remote mountainous area in northern Afghanistan. The earthquake destroyed 28 villages and resulted in the death of some 4,000 persons, with a further 20,000 rendered homeless. Bad weather from heavy snowfalls and rugged terrain hampered relief supplies from reaching this isolated part of Afghanistan. Relief supplies were therefore transported to the affected area more slowly than expected by land and air from within Afghanistan and from Pakistan and Tajikistan. The first aircraft to bring relief supplies was from the Pakistani air force. ICRC supported airdrop operations, which the United Nations complemented with airlifts. Coordination between agencies, both at Islamabad and in the field, was conducted efficiently and effectively, with ICRC coordinating non-food relief, the United Nations coordinating food supplies and Médecins Sans Frontières taking responsibility for medical supply coordination. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan served as the focal point for information collation, consolidation and dissemination.

31. The 1998 consolidated appeal for Afghanistan was launched on 4 February 1998, seeking some US$ 157 million to meet assistance needs between 1 January and 31 December 1998. The appeal is a transitional one, constituting one of the first steps in implementing the assistance strategy for Afghanistan. The appeal suggests ways in which a common programme can be defined and realized, and emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the process is collaborative and transparent to all stakeholders. The appeal includes a number of longer-term projects, such as those in the fields of education and rural and urban rehabilitation, which are increasingly recognized as being fundamental to the achievement of sustainable peace.

32. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, visited Afghanistan from 20 to 25 February 1998. He visited Kabul, Faizabad and Kandahar and met with senior local authorities and aid workers. Mr. Vieira de Mello underlined the importance of improved security and of a unified, coherent and consistent approach by United Nations agencies in the implementation of humanitarian assistance programmes.

33. The deteriorating security conditions for United Nations personnel continued to be of serious concern to me. I was particularly disturbed to learn that Taliban aircraft bombed Bamyan airport on 31 December and 1 January, when

United Nations personnel and aircraft were on the ground. On the first occasion, WFP was initiating an airlift of emergency food supplies to Bamyan, with the cooperation of the Pakistani authorities. On the second occasion, a United Nations team was at Bamyan airport to examine the security conditions. These attacks not only prevented the delivery of urgently needed food to 160,000 people who rely on United Nations assistance, but also jeopardized the safety of humanitarian workers. In both cases, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan had obtained flight clearance from the Taliban in advance.

IV. ALLEGATIONS OF MASS KILLINGS

34. Disturbing evidence of possible mass killings surfaced during the reporting period, with accusations of mutual atrocities committed by combatants against civilian populations and prisoners of war. The seriousness of these accusations, which carry heavy moral, political and legal implications, has compelled me to draw the special attention of Member States to a future course of action the Organization should take in order to address the situations.

35. Following consolidation of his control over Jowzjan Province, General Dostum announced in mid-November that his forces had discovered a number of mass graves in northern Afghanistan. The General alleged that, while he was in exile in Turkey, Taliban prisoners had been massacred during the summer of 1997 under orders of his rival, General Malik. The allegation was denied by General Malik, who maintained, inter alia, that those buried in mass graves were soldiers who had been killed during the fighting.

36. Immediately after the news broke, I issued a statement on 18 November and expressed deep concern about the reported discovery of mass graves. I also instructed UNSMA to dispatch immediately a team to the area to obtain firsthand information. The UNSMA team, which visited Sheberghan on 19 November, was taken to the sites of mass graves by General Dostum himself. Various signs were observed, including human remains near the grave surfaces, which indicated that a large number of bodies were buried there. The team recommended that since it was unable to determine whether those buried were troops killed in action or prisoners executed, a prima facie investigation should be conducted by experts. A copy of the report was immediately forwarded to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

37. Subsequently, Mr. Paik, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights for Afghanistan, visited Afghanistan between 30 November and 13 December 1997 and travelled to the sites of the alleged massacres. A forensic expert who accompanied Mr. Paik remained in the region for a longer period and on 6 January 1998 submitted a report to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In the report, the forensic expert concluded that of the three areas he visited in northern Afghanistan for a preliminary investigation, two areas contained evidence that might support allegations of human rights abuses. He recommended that a neutral team of independent investigators re-examine those areas as soon as logistically possible.

38. Similar allegations of atrocities were made by Hazara leaders. They alleged that while retreating from the northern port of Hairaton in September 1997, Taliban troops had massacred the elders, women and children of villages near Mazar-i-Sharif. The Taliban authorities denied the allegation. During the mission, Mr. Paik also visited those villages. He recommended that an investigation be carried out to excavate, with permission, bodies in order to verify the allegations.

39. In January 1998, General Dostum alleged new atrocities by Taliban soldiers during their two-week occupation of Faryab Province in December 1997. While most residents of the affected villages fled before the Taliban advance, some of the noncombatants left behind - mainly the very old, women and small children - had reportedly fallen victim to acts of rape, murder, arson, looting, beatings and abductions. While the Taliban denied the accusations, the Northern Alliance leaders have called on the United Nations to investigate these alleged Taliban atrocities.

V. ACTIVITIES AT THE UNITED NATIONS

40. I stressed in my previous report (A/52/682-S/1997/894) that in view of the unabated supply of arms and the divergence of ways in which the countries concerned seemed to be dealing with the Afghan conflict, a solid international framework must be established in order to address the external aspects of the Afghan question. It was in this context that the Special Envoy and Mr. Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, convened on 3 March the 4th meeting of the "Six plus Two". The group comprises the neighbours of Afghanistan - China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - as well as the Russian Federation and the United States.

41. At the meeting, the "Six plus Two" discussed and finalized their common talking points, which were to be used by them individually and collectively when they consulted the Afghan factions (see annex). They also had a preliminary exchange of views on effective and even-handed ways to curb the flow of arms and other war-making materials into Afghanistan, including the possibility of an embargo.

42. I am pleased to note that other than the "Six plus Two" group, a number of countries have shown keen interest in Afghanistan and expressed strong support for the United Nations efforts. Some of these other countries have expressed their intention to coordinate their diplomatic efforts with those of the "Six plus Two", including by using the same talking points in their own contacts with the Afghan factions.

VI. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

43. The tragedy of Afghanistan continues as the factions, supported by the uninterrupted supply of arms from outside, keep fighting in defiance of the will of the vast majority of the Afghan people. Foreign interference by countries in the region and beyond in the form of active political and military support of

one faction or another, reinforces the reluctance of the faction leaders to engage in serious political dialogue with one another and remains a major cause of the prolonged turmoil in Afghanistan.

44. In view of this, I remain convinced that it is imperative for the United Nations and Member States to take a hard look at the external aspects of the Afghan question and attempt to address them in earnest. This, of course, includes genuine efforts on the part of the countries concerned to find a common approach to the Afghan question and to agree on measures to curb the flow of arms and other war-making materials into Afghanistan.

45. While the focus remains on the external aspects, the United Nations will not turn away from the necessity of simultaneously addressing the internal aspects of the conflict. UNSMA will continue to maintain close contacts with Afghan parties and personalities with a view to ensuring an immediate ceasefire, which should be followed by genuine negotiations among the warring factions for national reconciliation.

46. I note with increasing alarm that, in recent months, the repeated mutual allegations of mass killings by the Afghan factions have heightened still further ethnic and sectarian tensions in Afghanistan. These developments warrant urgent action on the part of the United Nations; credible efforts should be made immediately in order to separate fact from unsubstantiated rumour. The need to verify accusations of human rights violations is indispensable, not only because of the gravity of the acts, but also to demonstrate United Nations responsiveness and even-handedness vis-à-vis the Afghan factions.

47. I recall in this context that in paragraph 13 of resolution 52/211 B, which was adopted by consensus, the General Assembly requested me to continue to investigate fully reports about mass killings of prisoners of war and civilians and incidents of rape in Afghanistan. The Security Council, in its presidential statement of 16 December 1997 (S/PRST/1997/55), noted with deep concern the reports about mass killings of prisoners of war and civilians in Afghanistan and supported my intention to continue to investigate fully such reports.

48. With the above resolution and statement in mind, a thorough examination was made of the report provided by the forensic expert who accompanied Mr. Paik, as well as of reports from UNSMA on the subject. I am already in close consultation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with a view to launching the investigations called for under resolution 52/211 B.

49. The objective of these investigations, to be organized and conducted by the High Commissioner, would be to establish, to the extent possible, the facts with respect to the allegations. These investigations should cover, but not be limited to, all the allegations mentioned in section IV of the present report. It should be noted at this juncture that in order to conduct the investigations it will be indispensable for the United Nations to be given the cooperation of all the Afghan parties concerned. The findings of these investigations will be reported to the General Assembly and the Security Council.

50. In the meantime, I am obliged to repeat the plea already made so many times by my predecessors and me: that those Member States concerned should heed the

wish of the ever more desperate Afghan people that they cease supplying war-making materials to the Afghan factions.

51. In conclusion, I wish to take this opportunity to express my thanks to my Special Envoy, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, for his continuing efforts and dedication to the Afghan peace process. I also wish to thank the personnel of UNSMA and its Acting Head, Mr. James C. Ngobi, for their dedication and perseverance in carrying out the tasks entrusted to them in extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances.

ANNEX

Final text of talking points on Afghanistan

Since October 1997, the United Nations Secretariat has convened in New York several meetings of a group of eight countries (comprising the six neighbours of Afghanistan, plus the United States of America and the Russian Federation). The group agreed that the United Nations and the eight Member States involved should be engaged - individually and collectively - with all the Afghan parties and that, in meetings with these parties, the following points should be made by the United Nations and all the members of the "Group of Eight":

1. The Afghan war, which has gone on for so long, has caused untold human misery and material destruction. It constitutes a serious threat to the territorial integrity of the country and to the national unity of its people. It is also a serious threat to regional and international security. It must be brought to a rapid close.

2. It is a matter of concern and regret that the Afghan leaders, whose forces are doing the actual fighting, have to date shown little readiness for serious negotiations with their opponents; these parties are now strongly urged to respond to calls for peace which are made by their own people, as well as by the United Nations and the international community at large.

3. For too long, whenever one side or another in Afghanistan has felt confident of victory, it has rebuffed efforts to bring about a peaceful solution and has only shown interest in negotiations when the military situation is reversed and it, in turn, has felt under threat - by which time the other side has lost its earlier interest in dialogue.

4. The involvement of outside powers in moral and material encouragement and support of the objectives of various Afghan groups has exacerbated the tragedy of Afghanistan. It has also raised suspicions and worsened relations among outside powers. It has not led to any of the Afghan groups achieving their objectives. The Group of Eight sees no signs of a change in this situation, no matter how long fighting among Afghan groups and outside support for this continues. Moreover, this continued fighting inside Afghanistan is causing the loss of promising opportunities for regional development which could benefit Afghanistan and its neighbours.

5. Therefore, the Eight have concluded that the time has come for all States Members of the United Nations, starting with the Group of Eight, to put pressure on their respective friends in Afghanistan to recognize - once and for all - that there can never be a military solution to the Afghan conflict because no one faction (whatever the composition of its current alliance) can win an outright victory or impose an exclusive dominance over the whole country.

6. In this connection, the Eight have agreed that the United Nations and all Member States should look at ways to see how the flow of arms and other supplies to the warring parties can be checked and, for example, if and how

a mandatory arms embargo could be implemented in a fair and verifiable manner. This needs to be done in such a manner that it does not provide advantage to any one group. If this is not possible, the Eight have agreed to consider, on a voluntary and unilateral basis, refraining from actions - including the supply of assistance - which could aggravate the war in Afghanistan.

7. Afghanistan needs a representative government, acceptable to all ethnic, religious, cultural, political and social groups in Afghanistan. Such a government could take on the arduous tasks of economic reconstruction, while at the same time adhering to international norms of behaviour and honouring international conventions to which Afghanistan is a party, in particular those regarding such issues as terrorism, narcotics, unhindered access to humanitarian assistance, as well as human rights, including the human rights of women and girls.

8. While there continue to be disturbing reports of human rights abuses, including evidence of mass executions, some encouraging signs have emerged recently amid the gloom of continued fighting, notably the stated readiness of both sides to withdraw preconditions for negotiating with each other, leading to the conclusion that now would be a good time to start such negotiations under United Nations auspices, with the participation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, at a venue to be agreed upon.

9. Both sides should take some specific actions that the other side would interpret as genuine confidence-building measures and evidence of a desire to reach a settlement.

10. Relevant United Nations resolutions offer a good basis to reach agreement speedily on a ceasefire to be observed by all the warring parties; a mechanism will need to be established with the participation of all Afghan parties to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire. Reference can be made in particular to General Assembly resolution 51/195 B of 17 December 1996, operative paragraph 3 of which reads as follows:

> ["The General Assembly,]
>
> "3. Calls upon all Afghan parties to cease immediately all armed hostilities, to renounce the use of force, to put aside their differences and to engage in a political dialogue aimed at achieving national reconciliation and a lasting political settlement of the conflict and establishing a fully representative and broad-based transitional government of national unity".

11. The United Nations, as a universally recognized intermediary, must continue to play a central and impartial role in international efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict.

12. The United Nations Secretariat and the Group of Eight will endeavour to mobilize the international community in a major coordinated effort, beyond those activities now under way, for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan once conditions of relative normality and stability prevail in the country.

UNITED NATIONS **S**

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12 March 1998

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LETTER DATED 11 MARCH 1998 FROM THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to draw to your attention the text of a statement on Kosovo agreed by the members of the Contact Group at their meeting in London on 9 March 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. J. GOMERSALL
Deputy Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement on Kosovo adopted by the members of the Contact Group, meeting in London on 9 March 1998

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the Contact Group countries, together with representatives of the European Commission and the Office of the High Representative, met in London on 9 March 1998 to discuss the increasingly tense situation in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the unacceptable use of force over recent days. The Balkans region has seen too much bloodshed in recent years or the international community to stand aside.

2. We recalled that when we met in New York on 24 September 1997, we voiced deep concern over developments in Kosovo and called upon the authorities in Belgrade and the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community to join in a peaceful dialogue. We are dismayed that in the period since September, rather than taking steps to reduce tensions or to enter without preconditions into dialogue towards a political solution, the Belgrade authorities have applied repressive measures in Kosovo. We note with particular concern the recent violence in Kosovo, resulting in at least 80 fatalities, and condemn the use of excessive force by Serbian police against civilians, and against peaceful demonstrators in Pristina on 2 March.

3. Our condemnation of the actions of the Serbian police should not in any way be mistaken for an endorsement of terrorism. Our position on this is clear. We wholly condemn terrorist actions by the Kosovo Liberation Army or any other group or individual. Those in the Kosovar Albanian community who speak for the different political constituencies should make it clear that they, too, abhor terrorism. We insist likewise that those outside the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia who are supplying finance, arms or training for terrorist activity in Kosovo should immediately cease doing so.

4. We condemn the large-scale police actions of the last 10 days that further inflamed an already volatile situation. The violent repression of non-violent expression of political views is completely indefensible. We call upon the authorities in Belgrade to invite independent forensic experts to investigate the very serious allegations of extrajudicial killings. If these accusations are borne out, we expect the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to prosecute and punish those responsible.

5. Our commitment to human rights values means that we cannot ignore such disproportionate methods of control. Government authorities have a special responsibility to protect the human and civil rights of all citizens and to ensure that public security forces act judiciously and with restraint.

6. In the light of the deplorable violence in Kosovo, we feel compelled to take steps to demonstrate to the authorities in Belgrade that they cannot defy international standards without facing severe consequences. The Contact Group has decided to take a broad range of actions to address the current situation on an urgent basis. The Contact Group welcomes the continuation of consultations in the United Nations Security Council, in view of the implications of the

situation in Kosovo for regional security. Against that background, the Contact Group:

- Requests a mission to Kosovo by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

- Urges the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to begin gathering information related to the violence in Kosovo that may fall within its jurisdiction. The authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have an obligation to cooperate with the International Tribunal. Contact Group countries will make available to the Tribunal substantiated relevant information in their possession;

- Supports the proposal for a new mission by Felipe Gonzalez as the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that would include a new and specific mandate for addressing the problems in Kosovo;

- Supports the return of the OSCE long-term missions to Kosovo, the Sandjak and Vojvodina;

- Recommends that the Special Session of the OSCE Permanent Council meeting on 11 March arrange for embassies in Belgrade of OSCE participating States to intensify their visits to Kosovo so as to provide for a continuous presence;

- Will continue vigorously to support the efforts of Sant'Egidio to secure implementation of the Education Agreement and to identify resources to assist a fair and acceptable arrangement;

- Proposes the establishment of an international consortium including non-governmental organizations that would promote the building of a civil society in Kosovo and the distribution of humanitarian assistance;

- Recognizing that neighbouring countries of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have legitimate security concerns stemming from violence and unrest in Kosovo, will arrange an urgent meeting of the Contact Group with representatives of Governments in the region to discuss the grave consequences of an inter-ethnic conflict and its possible spillover to other parts of the region. We expect them to do all in their power to prevent support for terrorism. The meeting will in particular address:

  - The possible despatch of a short-term OSCE monitoring group to enhance the ability of the Albania mission's Shkodra field office to monitor the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo) border;

  - The possible strengthening of the present OSCE mission in Skopje;

- Recommends that consideration be given to adapting the current mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), and would support the maintenance of an international military presence on the ground in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia when the current mandate of UNPREDEP expires;

- Will monitor the situation in Kosovo by frequent joint visits to Pristina by Contact Group and other representatives.

7. At the same time, it is not enough for the killing to stop; too much damage has already been done to human life and to the credibility of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Because of the gravity of the situation, we endorse the following measures, to be pursued immediately:

(a) Consideration by the Security Council of a comprehensive arms embargo against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo;

(b) Refusal to supply equipment to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which might be used for internal repression, or for terrorism;

(c) Denial of visas for senior Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbian representatives responsible for repressive action by security forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Kosovo;

(d) A moratorium on government-financed export credit support for trade and investment, including government financing for privatizations, in Serbia.

The Contact Group notes that the Russian Federation cannot support measures (c) and (d) above for immediate imposition. But if there is no progress towards the steps called for by the Contact Group, the Russian Federation will then be willing to discuss all the above measures.

We call upon President Milosevic to take rapid and effective steps to stop the violence and engage in a commitment to find a political solution to the issue of Kosovo through dialogue. Specifically, he should within 10 days:

- Withdraw the special police units and cease action by the security forces affecting the civilian population;

- Allow access to Kosovo for the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations as well as by representatives of the Contact Group and other embassies;

- Commit himself publicly to begin a process of dialogue, along the lines of paragraph 10, with the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community;

- Cooperate in a constructive manner with the Contact Group in the implementation of the actions specified in paragraph 6 above which require action by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

If President Milosevic takes these steps, we will immediately reconsider the measures we have now adopted. If he fails to take these steps, and repression continues in Kosovo, the Contact Group will move to further international measures, and specifically to pursue a freeze on the funds held abroad by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbian Governments.

The Contact Group has decided to meet again on 25 March 1998 to assess the response of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

8. Belgrade's own actions have seriously set back the process of normalization of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's relations with the international community. Unless the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia takes steps to resolve the serious political and human rights issues in Kosovo, there is no prospect of any improvement in its international standing. On the other hand, concrete progress to resolve the serious political and human rights issues in Kosovo will improve the international position of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and prospects for normalization of its international relationships and full rehabilitation in international institutions.

9. No one should misunderstand our position on the core issue involved. We support neither independence nor the maintenance of the status quo. As we have set out clearly, the principles for a solution of the Kosovo problem should be based upon the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and be in accordance with OSCE standards, the Helsinki principles and the Charter of the United Nations. Such a solution also must take into account the rights of the Kosovo Albanians and all those who live in Kosovo. We support an enhanced status for Kosovo within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which a substantially greater degree of autonomy would bring and recognize that this must include meaningful self-administration.

10. The way to defeat terrorism in Kosovo is for Belgrade to offer the Kosovar Albanian community a genuine political process. The authorities in Belgrade and the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community must assume their responsibility to enter without preconditions into a meaningful dialogue on political status issues. The Contact Group stands ready to facilitate such a dialogue.

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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 12 March 1998 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General

I wish to inform you of the current dangerous developments regarding the deteriorating situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. On 10 March 1998, Israeli soldiers shot and killed three Palestinian men and wounded four others at an army checkpoint in the West Bank between the Palestinian villages of Tarkoumiah and Idnah, approximately 8 miles west of the city of Al-Khalil (Hebron). The men were Palestinian labourers from the village of Dura, who were killed as they rode in a van returning to their homes after a day of work in Israel. The Israeli troops indiscriminately opened fire upon the van without any provocation.

Following this tragedy, clashes erupted in the West Bank between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians mourning and protesting the killings. On 11 March 1998, Israeli troops fired rubber-coated metal bullets at the protesters, wounding approximately 34 Palestinians in and around Al-Khalil and approximately 10 other civilians in and around the city of Ramallah. Today, continuing clashes resulted in the wounding of another 27 Palestinian protesters. Further, in two separate incidents near Ramallah and Al-Khalil, two Palestinian youths were shot and wounded by Israeli settlers.

This is a time characterized by the continuing deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process owing to continuous Israeli violations and

non-compliance with the agreements reached between the two sides. Moreover, it is a time of increasing despair among the Palestinian people owing to the serious deterioration of the living conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, as a result of the illegal policies and practices of Israel, in violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, which is applicable to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. Such recent actions by Israel, the occupying Power, only further fuel the tensions in the area and the overwhelming frustration and despair of the Palestinian people.

Clearly, while the Israeli side continuously vocalizes its alleged need for security as the reason for its refusal to proceed with the implementation of overdue provisions in the agreements reached, the security of the Palestinian people continues to remain an arbitrary consideration at constant risk at the hands of Israeli soldiers and settlers. Further, Israeli army checkpoints, which remain positioned throughout the West Bank owing to continuous delays in the redeployment of the Israeli army in violation of the agreements reached, are often the scenes of physical and verbal harassment and violence against the Palestinian people.

The continuation of such Israeli policies and practices in violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people, international humanitarian law, United Nations resolutions and the agreements reached between the two sides within the context of the Middle East peace process serves as a further reason for the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to address illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this regard, the United Nations, through all its relevant organs, must strive to genuinely uphold its permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is solved in all its aspects.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36, 37 and 87, as well as of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations

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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Identical letters dated 11 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement issued by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on 10 March 1998 concerning the situation in Kosovo and Metohija.

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 113 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/53/50.

ANNEX

Statement issued by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on 10 March 1998 concerning the situation in Kosovo and Metohija

At its today's meeting, the Government of the Republic of Serbia reviewed the information of the relevant ministries on the situation in Kosovo and Metohija and, in that framework, the information of the Ministry of the Interior on the measures taken against terrorism, submitted by Colonel-General Vlastimir Djordjevic, Head of the Department for Public Security and Dragisa Ristivojevic, Deputy Head of the Department of State Security.

The Government assessed that the recent activities of the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija were carried out exclusively in the function of combatting terrorism, which has escalated in the past few months bringing about the loss of life of a great number of innocent citizens-Serbs, Albanians and members of the Ministry of the Interior.

Consequently, the Government noted that the undertaken measures had a strictly limited scope with a view to defending against ruthless attacks of terrorists and to liquidating the terrorist core, and that they were carried out respecting regulations and security of other citizens and of their property.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia condemns in the harshest terms the terrorism of the Albanian separatists in Kosovo and Metohija and confirms the readiness of all authorities in Serbia to ensure in Kosovo and Metohija, as in the rest of Serbia, the rule of law, full equality and life in peace and security of all citizens, regardless of their nationality.

Serbia makes a clear distinction between terrorists and terrorism on one hand, and the members of the Albanian national minority on the other, and calls upon responsible representatives of the Albanian national minority to disassociate themselves from terrorism and join in universal international condemnation of that scourge.

The Ministry of the Interior informed the public of all measures taken against the terrorists. Diplomatic representatives in Belgrade and foreign journalists were given the opportunity to visit the villages in the Drenica area where the activities against the terrorists were carried out and see for themselves that the activities of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia were strictly in the function of capturing terrorist gangs and preventing their activities.

In view of the fact that they were able to directly establish the actual state of affairs and that the authorities had nothing to hide, the Government considers that for the sake of full truth it would also be useful if an expert group of the International Committee of the Red Cross visited Kosovo and Metohija and in cooperation with the Yugoslav Red Cross, verified the rumours circulated in some media, and in that respect, extends an invitation to them to do so.

It is the long-standing policy of Serbia not to differentiate among its citizens on the basis of their national, religious or any other background. The Government of Serbia as well as all other authorities in the Republic equally care of all citizens of the Republic of Serbia and shall not allow in the future either any injustice against any of its citizens, including the members of national minorities whose rights are protected in the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the highest international standards.

The Government most resolutely confirms that all questions related to Kosovo and Metohija should be resolved within Serbia by political means and in accordance with international standards in the field of protection of the rights of national minorities. There is a consensus of all political forces and parties of influence in the Republic on that score, as well as the position of the relevant international factors, representing the best guarantee for its successful resolution.

The Government takes this opportunity to reaffirm that it is open to have all questions related to the realization of civil and human rights of all citizens in Kosovo and Metohija as well as of faster economic and cultural development, resolved through dialogue and by political means, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, European and international standards, OSCE principles, Paris Charter and the Charter of the United Nations. The Government particularly points out that it accepts that all rights and principles contained in the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe on the protection of national minorities be realized in this way.

By its overall policy and concrete measures, the Government shall ensure conditions for a stable political, economic and cultural development, promotion of relations of tolerance and trust among all

citizens in Kosovo and Metohija. The Government proves this readiness by the fact that its representatives in the Group 3+3 have in the usual manner already submitted their proposal of operative measures for the implementation of the Agreement on the normalization of the education system in Kosovo and Metohija.

In accordance with the above positions, the Government of the Republic of Serbia invites the responsible representative of the Albanian national minority to embark upon open dialogue in order to resolve all concrete issues, because it is the only way to promote political processes with a view to resolving vital questions of the citizens in this Province of ours.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia once again stresses that the only perspective of Kosovo and Metohija is in peace, development, tolerance, equality and co-existence.

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LETTER DATED 12 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDONESIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In my capacity as Chairman of the expanded Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina in New York, I have the honour to inform you of the meeting of the Group that was held on 10 March 1998.

In this regard, the expanded Contact Group has expressed support for the request made by the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations in his letter addressed to the President of the Security Council dated 26 February 1998 (S/1998/160) that the Security Council undertake an urgent review of the matter mentioned in the letter. The Security Council continues to retain the authority and responsibility to address the fate of the population of the "safe areas", in particular Srebrenica.

I would appreciate it if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Makarim WIBISONO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 1144 (1997) of 19 December 1997. It summarizes the activities of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) since my report of 10 December 1997 (S/1997/966) as well as the steps taken to implement the recommendations of the meeting of the Peace Implementation Council held at Bonn on 9 and 10 December 1997 (S/1997/979, annex). The report also provides an overview of the activities of the United Nations system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2. On 16 January 1998, Ms. Elisabeth Rehn (Finland) succeeded Mr. Kai Eide (Norway) as my Special Representative and Coordinator of United Nations Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 2 March, Mr. Richard Monk (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) took over from Mr. Manfred Seitner (Denmark) as Commissioner of the International Police Task Force (IPTF).

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE MISSION

3. The authorized strength of IPTF remains at 2,027, deployed in 64 stations in seven regions covering the whole country (see annex).

4. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first phase of police restructuring is finally nearing completion and the police in eight out of 10 cantons have been inaugurated. The first phase comprises reducing the number of police officers to accepted international standards, selecting and certifying the officers and providing them with preliminary training. Since December 1997, IPTF has inaugurated the police in the ethnically mixed cantons 3 (Zenica) and 4 (Tuzla), which employ over 3,000 police officers. Croats constitute an important minority in both cantons. However, officials in the Croat-dominated cantons 8 (Ljubuški) and 10 (Livno), with approximately 900 police officers, continue to delay police inauguration over disputes concerning uniform insignias, minority representation in the police force and the appointment of cantonal deputy ministers from the Bosniac minority.

5. The problems in cantons 8 and 10 are indicative of the challenges which IPTF has begun to encounter in a systematic review that is being conducted on the implementation of the first phase of police restructuring throughout the Federation - especially in the ethnically mixed cantons 6 (Travnik) and 7 (Mostar). The continued existence of unofficial separate, ethnically based chains of command in these cantons has impeded cooperation between Croat and Bosniac police officers in joint investigations of ethnically motivated crimes, such as house burnings in areas of minority return. In addition, some municipalities in these cantons, which are dominated by one ethnic group, have reverted to a pattern of police patrols by the dominant group only. Both these developments demonstrate the continuing need for close monitoring of the local police even after the first phase of restructuring has been completed.

6. The second phase of police restructuring will concentrate on monitoring the performance of the newly inaugurated police services, recording failures of police to comply with the new standards, increasing minority representation and building capacity for self-sufficiency in training. Increasing the minority representation will be the central challenge in this phase. The current review of the implementation of the first phase of police restructuring will provide the basis for the efforts in the second phase to increase the representation of minorities in the cantonal police forces of the Federation towards the goals set by the 25 April 1996 Bonn-Petersberg Agreement (which established the ethnic distribution of the 1991 census as the basis for the composition of the Federation police). These efforts will take particular account of the need for the deployment of minority police officers in areas to which refugees and displaced persons of that minority are expected to return. Each canton will also be given a target for the induction of Serb officers, of which there are at present almost none in the cantonal police forces of the Federation. The implementation of this second phase will require intensive support from IPTF, in terms of both advice and training, as well as in constant monitoring of implementation in every municipality.

7. In the Republika Srpska the election of a Government headed by Prime Minister Milorad Dodik on 18 January 1998 appears to have resolved the political crisis which began in June 1997. Mr. Dodik has consistently supported the implementation of the Dayton Agreement and has promised to cooperate fully with international organizations charged with helping to implement it. In meetings on police restructuring, the newly appointed Interior Minister Milovan Stankovic has expressed his readiness to accelerate training and instruction in the Republika Srpska to allow early certification of all proposed 8,500 police officers.

8. Brčko's multi-ethnic police began operations on 31 December 1997, as scheduled by the Brčko Supervisory Order of 13 October 1997. The 230 police officers of all three ethnic groups are headed by a Serb police chief with Bosniac and Croat deputies, and led by an ethnically mixed police command staff. Since it began operations, there have been at least 10 patrols per day, primarily in those villages in the Zone of Separation where minorities are resettling, on major transit routes and intersections, and near international border crossings. IPTF needs to monitor each and every joint patrol in order to establish confidence for the minority police officers and for the population. On 21 February 1998, multi-ethnic patrols were introduced for the first time to

the town centre. It is the intention of the Commissioner to extend multi-ethnic policing from Brčko to public security centres in the Republika Srpska, especially in areas where Bosniac and Croat displaced persons and refugees are expected to return and in those areas where they have gained substantial representation in recent elections.

9. With the progress in police restructuring in the Federation and prospects for rapid progress in police restructuring in the Republika Srpska, it has become increasingly important to offer assistance with uniforms, weapons and equipment, which is provided through the IPTF Trust Fund for Restructuring. I am grateful for the generous assistance extended by Canada, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway and Switzerland as well as for pledges from Italy and the United Kingdom, which will help to sustain the present pace of police restructuring throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. I appeal to the Governments of other countries to also contribute to the IPTF Trust Fund.

10. IPTF has maintained its rate of progress in training police to operate according to the principles of democratic policing. All 11,500 police officers in the Federation have now completed the two-day "information" course, which explains the Task Force's restructuring process and its aims. In the period under review, 3,098 officers completed the one-week "human dignity" course, which gives them a modern view of the role of the police officer in society (76 per cent of officers have now completed the course). In addition, 1,264 officers completed the three-week "transition" course, which is a condensed version of a police academy course and focuses on basic police skills (18 per cent have now completed the course). In the Republika Srpska, of a total future number of 8,500 police officers, over 6,500 have now completed the information course and 1,898 have completed the human dignity course. The first transition course has just begun.

11. Efforts continue by IPTF to assist the local police in rehabilitating and developing modern police academies as opposed to the current secondary school style programmes for cadets. The first Federation Police Academy was inaugurated near Sarajevo on 15 December 1997. Of the first class of 100 students, 58 are Croat, 20 are Bosniac and 22 are "Serbs and others". Under the new Government in Republika Srpska the police academy in Banja Luka reopened its doors on 9 February 1998. Of the first class of 733 cadets, 220 had previously been attending an "alternative" academy loyal to the Pale regime in Doboj. IPTF is preparing a curriculum for a professional police academy in line with the norms of democratic policing.

12. In support of freedom of movement, IPTF cooperates with the local police in both entities to implement the checkpoint policy, described in earlier reports (see S/1997/468, para. 5). On average, the Task Force now only approves about eight checkpoints per day. Since the introduction of the policy, the Stabilization Force (SFOR) has cooperated in removing 38 out of 151 identified illegal checkpoints.

13. On 10 January 1998, IPTF launched, in cooperation with SFOR and police in both entities, a two-week security operation ("Operation Corridor") on the transit road through the Republika Srpska between Sarajevo and Gorazde, which had been plagued by security incidents. During the operation, in which IPTF

established a full-time presence between Sarajevo and Trnovo, traffic increased from a mere trickle to 390 Republika Srpska and Federation vehicles per day. Another instance in which intensive IPTF monitoring has resulted in improved compliance, has been in the significant reduction of cases where local police officials are charging illegal visa fees and road taxes on cars entering the country from Croatia.

14. A most significant step in enhancing freedom of movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the introduction of a common licence plate, as mandated by the Peace Implementation Council in its Sintra and Bonn meetings. Entity police will no longer be able to stop a vehicle solely because the licence plate is from the other entity or from a part of the Federation controlled by the other ethnic group. Following the symbolic introduction of the first new plates on 2 February 1998, mass production of the plates has begun. IPTF will intensively monitor the production and random distribution of the plates, together with the new common vehicle registration document, until the change is completed in mid-1998.

15. In cooperation with SFOR, IPTF has continued its programme of weapons inspections at local police stations, to ensure that local police only maintain the equipment necessary for policing in their areas: one long-barrelled rifle for every 10 officers and one side arm for each officer. A total of 570 weapons inspections were carried out between 1 November 1997 and 28 February 1998. Illegal weapons were found in 127 cases: 57 in the Republika Srpska and 70 in the Federation. Among the weapons confiscated by SFOR were 49 pistols, 645 long-barrelled weapons, 19 grenade and rocket launchers, 51 anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, 405 grenades and over 49,149 rounds of ammunition.

16. IPTF continued to cooperate closely with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in efforts to implement the results of the municipal elections held on 13 and 14 September 1997 and the Republika Srpska Assembly elections held on 22 and 23 November 1997, particularly by developing security plans with the local police for sessions of the municipal assemblies.

17. Despite tangible progress in police restructuring, there are still numerous instances where local police throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina do not operate according to the principles of democratic policing, especially in areas designated for the return of minority refugees and displaced persons. This was the case, inter alia, in Drvar, Stolac, Valika Kladusa, Srebrenica, Mostar and Zepce.

18. In the Croat-controlled municipality of Drvar, in canton 10 (Livno), there have been 19 cases of suspected arson of Serb-owned homes since 1 January 1998. Local police have not identified any suspects in these crimes. In the Croat-controlled municipality of Stolac, in canton 7 (Mostar), there have been over 13 incidents of violence against Bosniacs since 1 January 1998. Although local police conducted joint investigations, at the urging of IPTF, there have been no arrests. In Velika Kladusa, in canton 1 (Bihac), returning Bosniac displaced persons have been routinely interrogated by local police controlled by the Democratic Action Party (SDA) concerning the activities of the Democratic Peoples' Union (DNZ) party, to which they belong and which is loyal to exiled former Bosniac Presidency member Fikret Abdic. In addition, since

1 January 1998, three homes of DNZ supporters in Velika Kladusa have been bombed. Local police investigations have led to no arrests.

19. In the Republika Srpska municipality of Srebrenica, local police failed to provide adequate security to enable a Bosniac delegation to attend inter-party talks concerning the formation of a municipal government on 16 January 1998. Following a series of explosions and car stonings on 24 February that took place in the centre of Mostar near the former confrontation line, Croat and Bosniac police have agreed to share information but not to conduct a joint investigation. In the Croat-controlled municipality of Zepce, in canton 4 (Zenica), local police failed to follow the advice of IPTF and take steps to control an organized crowd of 500 protesters, who threatened officials from UNMIBH and OSCE during the first attempt to hold the inaugural session of a Bosniac-dominated municipal council on 4 December 1997.

20. In 1998 minority returns are to be a priority task for the international community. IPTF has therefore increased its cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other agencies in preparing for the return of refugees and displaced persons. Since the introduction of police officers of the minority ethnicity is an important confidence-building measure which will facilitate the return of refugees, IPTF will concentrate its efforts in this direction. IPTF has also begun to work closely with local police to develop security plans in communities where minorities are expected to return and to monitor the legal conduct of property disputes. In addition, UNMIBH has joined the Sarajevo Returns Commission and the Sarajevo Housing Committee and has appointed senior IPTF officials in each region to cooperate with the Return and Reconstruction Task Force and UNHCR in planning for returns.

21. The work of the UNMIBH Human Rights Office is mainly aimed at ensuring that human rights investigations are conducted properly by the local police. IPTF monitors and non-police human rights staff therefore mainly initiate, assist and monitor investigations by local police. They undertake independent investigations only as a last resort.

22. Among the cases dealt with during the reporting period has been the investigation into the use of force in the arrest, in early February, of Goran Vasić, a Bosnian Serb accused of having killed Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turaijlić in January 1993 while under the protection of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The investigation is being conducted by the cantonal police authorities in conjunction with the Human Rights Office, which also monitors the trial in the Federation Courts. IPTF is also investigating the use of long-barrel weapons. In December, a disciplinary court in canton 6 (Travnik) of the Federation concluded hearings relating to the Jajce incidents of August 1997 (S/1997/966, para. 17). For the first time, IPTF gave evidence at hearings in a case against local police officers. The disciplinary action resulting from the hearings, which was welcomed by IPTF, included the dismissal of the chief of police, the transfer of his deputy to a non-supervisory job for one year, and salary reductions for seven officers.

23. UNMIBH has also urged the Ministry of Defence, including through the direct intervention by my Special Representative with the Federation Prime Minister, to

complete its investigation into the hidden detention of two former prisoners of war found by IPTF in Zenica prison last August. The Ministry of Defence report was submitted to the prosecution authorities in early March.

24. In the period from 1 December 1997 to 1 March 1998, over 200 human rights complaints were recorded, of which 50 cases have been settled and closed. Cases include police beatings, failure to issue identity cards to minorities, house burnings and property cases that relate to returning minority displaced persons and refugees. The UNMIBH Human Rights Office is also beginning to carry out surprise prison visits, to monitor selected trials and to gather gender-related data.

25. Activities in the human rights area have underlined the need for the local police to develop effective internal investigation systems and for early progress in the reform of the criminal justice system.

26. Civil Affairs officers have worked closely with IPTF on issues of police restructuring, freedom of movement and election implementation, by providing their good offices for local problem-solving. Civil Affairs officers have in particular assisted IPTF in inaugurating the cantonal police forces in the Federation and in developing a plan for multi-ethnic policing in the Republika Srpska. In Brčko, Civil Affairs assisted IPTF in developing the operational plan on multi-ethnic policing and testified at the Brčko arbitral hearings in Vienna in February. In collaboration with the Office of the High Representative, Civil Affairs developed the operational plan for the introduction of a joint licence plate for Bosnia and Herzegovina and participated in monitoring its introduction. In the implementation of results from the September 1997 elections, Civil Affairs officers continue to cooperate closely with IPTF and OSCE in the Regional and National Election Results Implementation Committees.

27. Civil Affairs and IPTF have established a joint training unit for UNMIBH personnel. During a one-week induction programme, the training unit provides courses to incoming IPTF monitors and other UNMIBH staff on the history of the conflict, the UNMIBH mandate, cooperating implementing agencies and mediation techniques. The Civil Affairs Training Unit has also organized seminars, workshops and presentations on these themes for all UNMIBH personnel.

28. The UNMIBH Legal Office has continued to advise the leadership of the mission on the local legal framework, the mandate of IPTF and legal issues arising from the administration and operation of the mission. In addition, it has issued 15 "Guidelines" of relevance to IPTF on matters relating to freedom of movement, property disputes, police restructuring, criminal procedure and the work of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The legal office also provided advice in the development of policy towards weapons inspections for IPTF and on property and return issues in the Sarajevo canton.

29. The Trust Fund Unit administered grants for restoring specialized medical services and repairing educational facilities in Sarajevo through its Quick Impact Fund. It is also working to streamline the financial accounting of Quick Impact and Trust Fund projects.

Mine Action Centre

30. Mine clearance activities had to be suspended in most parts of the country owing due to winter weather conditions. The final figure for area cleared of mines in 1997 by all programmes was 6.2 square kilometres. The winter months have provided opportunities to focus on mine awareness, refresher training of deminers and institutional development.

31. On 30 December 1997, the Governments of the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina signed an Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Mine Action. This, together with earlier decisions of the Council of Ministers, completes the legal steps necessary for the establishment of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMAC). Arrangements are now under way to transfer specific components of the United Nations Mine Action Centre (UNMAC) to BHMAC to provide the country with the technical capacity required for effective coordination of mine action programmes. UNMAC is also assisting the Governments of the Federation and the Republika Srpska in establishing their respective entity mine action centres by 31 March 1998, the deadline set by the Bonn meeting of the Peace Implementation Council. Remaining components of UNMAC, including its field offices and trained teams of deminers, will be transferred to the entity mine action centres.

32. A "Board of Donors", which brings together all major contributors to the Mine Action Programme, has been formally established. The Bosnia and Herzegovina and entity Governments are required to obtain the Board's agreement on major decisions affecting the programme, including the appointment of senior staff to the mine action centres.

33. Responsibility for local supervision of the activities of the UNMAC is being transferred from UNMIBH to the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Responsibility for funding and Headquarters supervision of the programme is being transferred from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

34. The United Nations Consolidated Appeal for 1998 set a target of US$ 23 million for the mine action centres work in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As at 28 February 1998, some US$ 2.75 million was available. UNDP urgently requires new commitments to this programme.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO RESOLUTION 1144 (1997)

35. In its resolution 1144 (1997) of 19 December 1997, the Security Council decided that UNMIBH and the IPTF, in the framework of the current mandate, should "be entrusted with ... the tasks referred to in the conclusions of the ... Sintra and Bonn [Peace Implementation Council] meetings" (para. 1). These tasks are: (a) the creation of specialized IPTF training units to address key public security issues, such as refugee returns; organized crime, drugs, corruption and terrorism; and public security crisis management (including crowd control); as well as training in the detection of financial crime and smuggling; and (b) cooperation with the Council of Europe and OSCE, under the coordination of the High Representative, in a programme of judicial and legal reforms,

including assessment and monitoring of the court system, development and training of legal professionals and restructuring of institutions within the judicial system.

36. Over the past weeks UNMIBH has worked out a concept for the practical implementation of the Security Council's request for specialized police training. It has also consulted with the High Representative and other organizations concerned on the division of labour regarding the judicial reform programme.

Specialized training

37. In order to design and deliver the training and advice needed to address the security concerns raised in the conclusions of the Peace Implementation Council, UNMIBH plans to set up three specialized police training units under the management of the IPTF Deputy Commissioner for Development. These units will be: (a) a Critical Incident Management Unit (for training and advice in the field of public security crisis management, crowd control and disaster preparedness and response), (b) an Organized Crime Unit (for training and advice on organized crime, corruption of public officials, smuggling and financial crime), and (c) a Drug Control Unit (for training and advice on narcotic prevention, local and international interdiction and street-level enforcement).

38. Once the restructuring of the police is completed, there will be 20,000 police officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (11,500 in the Federation and 8,500 in the Republika Srpska). All of them will require at least some exposure to all of these specialized areas of work. In the narcotics field in particular all police officers will need training in identifying possible criminals. In consultation with the ministers of the interior in the Federation and the Republika Srpska, the IPTF Commissioner will identify the numbers of officers in each of the 10 cantons of the Federation and 9 public security centres in the Republika Srpska who will be selected for courses of specialized training in the three disciplines.

39. Each specialized training unit will include a Headquarters team of six specialists, responsible for the development, delivery and management of the training programmes, the preparation of training materials, liaison with other international organizations and the entity Governments, and for providing technical advice at the level of the Federation and Republika Srpska Governments.

40. In addition, seven specialists will be deployed in the Federation and four in the Republika Srpska in the field of critical incident management; while for organized crime and drug control, it is proposed that four specialists in each subject will be deployed in the Federation and three in the Republika Srpska.

41. Consequently, in order to staff these specialized training units, 43 carefully selected specialists will need to be recruited as IPTF monitors. Special arrangements will be required with police-contributing countries to identify suitable candidates for these positions, in consultation with the IPTF Commissioner.

42. A careful study of the current IPTF strength has shown that it might be possible to accommodate 13 of the 43 required specialists on available posts, replacing departing IPTF monitors. This leaves a requirement for an increase of 30 posts in the overall strength of IPTF, bringing the total authorized strength from 2,027 to 2,057.

43. In addition, it is envisaged that 21 IPTF officers from the ranks of the present monitors will supplement and support the formal training given by the specialists of the Critical Incident Management Unit by assisting the local police with tactical planning and exercises for dealing with crowds, natural disasters and other forms of critical incidents. In this way it is ensured that there will be at least one IPTF monitor especially dedicated to the area of critical incident management in each canton of the Federation and each public security centre in the Republika Srpska. This intensive presence is a reflection of the assessment that the local police and IPTF will face major challenges in connection with refugee returns, which are a main objective of the international community for the year 1998.

Legal reform

44. Under the coordination of the High Representative, UNMIBH has held intensive consultations with the other concerned organizations on the design and implementation of a programme of legal and judicial reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The results of these consultations were summarized by the High Representative in a letter to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General dated 3 February 1998 which sets out the division of labour among the international organizations concerned. In that letter, the High Representative urges UNMIBH to focus initially on monitoring of the court system, taking advantage of its presence across the territory and the mandated work already begun in implementing Annex 11 of the Peace Agreement. The results of the monitoring work will be used to develop the restructuring and training functions, for which other organizations will take the lead.

45. The court structure in Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly complex. There are different judicial systems in each of the two entities, as well as the beginnings of a judicial structure at the state level. In addition, within the Federation, each of the 10 cantons has wide legislative authority. In the Republika Srpska there are 26 first-instance and 5 second-instance courts and in the Federation the figures are respectively 59 and 10. There are approximately 500 judges and 300 public prosecutors in the country as a whole. The total number of practising lawyers is estimated at about 1,000.

46. In order to carry out its part of the joint programme of legal reform, UNMIBH would require additional resources, as indicated in paragraph 44 of my previous report (S/1997/966) and point 2 (c) of section I of the conclusions of the Bonn Implementation Council (S/1997/979, annex). Specifically, UNMIBH would require 26 additional Professional staff with the relevant legal background. Twenty-one of them would be assigned to UNMIBH's regional offices, while 5 would work at Headquarters, analysing the reports of the court monitors and liaising with other organizations on the design and preparation of the associated training and restructuring programmes.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights

47. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has continued to support strategies of intervention with local authorities in cases of non-compliance involving decisions of the Human Rights Chamber, the Ombudsperson and the Property Commission. The Office continues to be involved in the strengthening of the integration of local legal institutions into the Federal court system. It participates in efforts aiming at the establishment of a common training centre for judges and prosecutors from all parts of the country. The Office continues to coordinate the monitoring of war crimes trials and other trials with ethnic implications and has provided human rights expertise to the gender-related activities of the UNMIBH Human Rights Office.

United Nations Children's Fund

48. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has continued its work in five basic programmes. In health, UNICEF continued promoting the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, ongoing implementation of the global Polio Eradication Initiative and promoting AIDS prevention. In education, a mine awareness programme continues. Through water and sanitation programmes, sanitary systems in 30 schools were rehabilitated, benefiting some 15,000 school children. A Federation Committee to prepare an initial report on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was created with UNICEF assistance, and a similar committee is planned in Republika Srpska. In the Federation, training continues on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As part of a policy advocated by UNICEF on integrating handicapped children into regular school environments, the first special classroom was opened in Gorazde.

United Nations Development Programme

49. UNDP continues to focus on multi-sectoral area-based development programmes, supported by selected national sectoral projects and assistance to policy development. The aim of the integrated programmes is to combine physical rehabilitation and socio-economic infrastructure with the creation of an enabling environment for the smooth reintegration of returning refugees and displaced persons with increased management responsibility given to local authorities. As a short-term bridging measure between the declining humanitarian aid and an improved macroeconomic environment, UNDP implemented a pilot Village Employment and Environment Programme to provide short-term employment for war-affected persons, while improving seriously damaged infrastructure and environment. These activities will be combined with vocational training programmes and micro-credit schemes to ensure sustainability.

50. UNDP has set up a donor trust fund in support of the new phase of the demining programme. The project aims to assist in the transfer of primary responsibility for the Mine Clearance Programme to the Government at both national and entity levels. Additionally, UNDP and UNHCR signed an agreement to facilitate mine clearance in UNHCR-designated priority areas with funds released to UNDP under the Trust Fund.

World Food Programme

51. The World Food Programme (WFP) has a current beneficiary caseload of 575,000 individuals. Rations were reduced between October 1997 and February 1998 owing to significant shortfalls in food availability. This came at a particularly difficult time after the country-wide re-categorization and reduction in beneficiary numbers. Full rations will resume in March based on confirmed pledges. A WFP-led Joint Food Aid Needs Assessment Mission is planned for March 1998 to review the policy of gradual reduction in the number of beneficiaries to approximately 200,000 by the last quarter of 1998. WFP support to small-scale, short-term rehabilitation activities continues in the transition away from direct relief aid. Priority will be given to activities which support minority return in 1998.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

52. UNHCR estimates that 120,000 refugees returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1997, bringing the number of refugees who have returned since the signing of the Dayton Agreement to a total of 210,00 persons; 6,700 returned in January and February 1998. The number of displaced persons who returned to their pre-war residences in 1997 is estimated at 58,000, including some 35,000 minorities. Of 220,000 displaced persons who have returned since the General Framework Agreement for Peace, 45,000 have been minority returns, mostly to the Federation. The pace of general return movements in 1998 will depend largely upon breakthroughs in minority returns, regional agreements and on the policy decisions on temporary protection in certain host countries.

53. In view of its specific protection mandate, particularly under Annex 7 of the Dayton Agreement, UNHCR is promoting, facilitating and monitoring the safe and dignified return of refugees and displace persons, with particular focus on minority returns. This includes, in cooperation with the Office of the High Representative, UNMIBH, OSCE and other key international and national institutions, working with the authorities to address political, legal and administrative obstacles to return, particularly regarding property, amnesty, registration, documents, security and freedom of movement. This is in addition to training and capacity-building, support for civil society, the establishment of legal aid and information centres and the introduction of legislative reforms relating to displacement, return and repatriation, citizenship, immigration and asylum.

54. UNHCR has recognized 10 "open cities", including 2 cities in the Republika Srpska: Konjic, Busovaca, Vogosca, Bihac, Gorazde, Kakanj, Mrkonjic Grad, Sipovo, Srbac and Laktasi. Recognition of additional potential open cities is expected. In addition, UNHCR has also actively supported the development of cantonal and inter-entity return plans, as stipulated in the conclusions of the Peace Implementation Council meeting at Bonn in December 1997, and has continued to work in close cooperation and consultation with the Office of the High Representative and the local and entity-level authorities.

55. Repatriation and return assistance (through shelter, income generation, legal advice and counselling, provision of non-food items and transport) and targeted support to extremely vulnerable individuals and residents of collective

centres continues. The focus of programme implementation has shifted from being mostly shelter-oriented to a flexible and integrated approach, particularly targeted at open cities and areas of minority return. Recruitment of staff and procurement for the demining programme implemented through UNDP and the Mine Action Centre is under way in order to support returns in spring 1998.

International Labour Organization

56. The International Labour Organization (ILO) continued to focus on: training the vulnerable unemployed in construction trades in Una-Sana canton (funded by UNDP); training the unemployed in electrical and mechanical trades in Gorazde (funded by the Government of Japan and UNDP); promoting micro-enterprise development through the new business development centre near Brčko and preparing for the establishment of similar centres around Sarajevo (funded by the Government of Italy and UNDP).

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

57. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continues to address food security emergency needs and coordination in the agricultural sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to provide technical assistance to develop a strategy for the sectors, particularly in rehabilitation. FAO fielded a mission aimed at assisting the ministries of agriculture of the Federation and of the Republika Srpska to formulate a strategy for the sustainable development of the agricultural sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Funding for the project will be provided by the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme.

58. In February, the Women in Development Division organized a mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina aimed at applying a micro-level participatory approach to agricultural planning and assisting the local authorities in identifying micro-level gender-related constraints that affect agricultural policies and development of the agricultural sector.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

59. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is opening a centre in Gorazde devoted to educational assistance to displaced women and is preparing a similar larger project for north-eastern areas of the Federation and the Republika Srpska. UNESCO is heading a cooperative effort among international organizations to explore improvements in curricula in the Federation. In the area of cultural heritage, the Organization is assisting the authorities in preparing an international project to reconstruct the Old Bridge of Mostar, and it has completed the restoration project for the Tabacica mosque in the Old Town of Mostar. The UNESCO-Soros Programme Bank has financed several short documentaries prepared by local producers on continuing social problems.

World Health Organization

60. The World Health Organization (WHO) is continuing to train family medicine teams in pilot sites throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Public health issues such as tuberculosis and polio immunization are priorities in a comprehensive

health programme aimed at meeting the community-level needs of the most vulnerable. Progress is also continuing on reconciliation and confidence-building among medical professionals. WHO-led inter-ethnic seminars on various technical issues are in high demand, and health professionals have begun to organize their own inter-entity gatherings. The public health directors of the Federation and the Republika Srpska held a two-day workshop on how to achieve the targets set by WHO's Health for All strategy.

World Bank activities

61. The World Bank's mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues its implementation of the economic reconstruction programme approved in Brussels in December 1995. Further donors' conferences organized by the World Bank and the European Union (EU) have followed each year since, confirming the strong willingness of the donor community to continue its support, and of Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue its excellent implementation of the programme. To date, a total of US$ 435 million in World Bank funds has been mobilized for 20 specific projects and additional donor funds are being managed by the Bank to co-finance the projects. The total value of projects prepared by the World Bank currently in the implementation phase is over $1.46 billion. By the end of December 1997, the number of contracts signed using World Bank-administered funds totalled over 2,550, for a value of $349 million. The Bank is also helping Bosnia and Herzegovina to introduce key institutional and policy reforms in the economic system to lay the foundations for lasting, sustainable growth.

62. The Bank has also mobilized substantial resources to rebuild housing in the UNHCR target zones for refugee/displaced person returns and to implement job-creation programmes and other schemes for local infrastructure development. Close coordination of World Bank programmes has resulted in excellent leverage of UNDP efforts and a particularly valuable contribution by UNDP to the World Bank-led reconstruction efforts. UNESCO and the World Bank continue to work closely on a Local Initiatives fashion project providing employment for refugee women and a Cultural Heritage project for Bosnia.

V. OBSERVATIONS

63. The period under review has seen further progress towards the implementation of UNMIBH's mandate and IPTF's tasks. In the Federation, there are only 2 cantons out of 10 where the new police force has still not been inaugurated. In the Republika Srpska the election of the new Government of Milorad Dodik provided fresh impetus for the restructuring process which, however, at present is still limited to the selection of police officers and initial training. In the conclusions to their meeting at Bonn on 9 and 10 December 1997, the Peace Implementation Council welcomed the achievements of IPTF and asked UNMIBH to take on important additional tasks.

64. The police restructuring in the Federation is being held up in the last two Croat-dominated cantons by issues of a purely political nature. These obstructions follow the same pattern as those blocking implementation of the municipal election results in Croat-majority areas, and barriers to return of displaced persons and refugees to Stolac and other Croat-dominated

municipalities. My Special Representative has supported the efforts of the High Representative to make it clear to the Croat authorities that political obstacles to the implementation of election results, refugee return and police reform cannot be tolerated. It is also necessary to start a serious effort to include Serb officers in the Federation police.

65. In the Republika Srpska, the restructuring of the police is still at a very early stage. The cooperative attitude of the new Government will in the near future have to be put to a serious test when, in the process of initiating and accelerating minority returns, Bosniac and Croat police officers will have to be included so as to gradually create a multi-ethnic police in the Republika Srpska, in parallel with, and in preparation for, the change in the ethnic composition of the population in connection with the expected minority returns.

66. The positive developments in the Republika Srpska and the transfer to a second phase of police reform in the Federation, are welcome, but have brought an increased workload for IPTF. These recent commitments have had to be absorbed alongside existing work on checkpoint monitoring, weapons inspections, human rights investigations, security of election implementation, security for the return of displaced persons and refugees, introduction of new licence plates and the distinct police regime in Brčko. Successes in dealing with long-standing problems and in initiating new patterns of police work have revealed, as the present report illustrates, the continuing importance of IPTF monitoring, to ensure that these gains are not lost.

67. The Security Council, in its resolution 1144 (1997), has endorsed the conclusions of the Bonn meeting of the Peace Implementation Council, which requested IPTF to carry out new intensive training programmes for the local police in a number of specialized fields. I fully concur with the view that such training would have a significant positive effect on key areas of the civilian implementation of the Dayton Agreement. I have outlined my proposal on how to respond to the Security Council's request in paragraphs 37 to 43 of the present report and I recommend that the Security Council approve the very modest increase in resources which is required.

68. It should be noted that, with the exception of the special additions for human rights investigations and Brčko, the basic number of IPTF monitors has not been changed since the establishment of the mission in December 1995, although the Task Force is now involved in a vastly greater range of activities. This has only been possible by minimizing the number of management positions, streamlining operational procedures and training and upgrading the skills of IPTF monitors.

69. In Bonn, the Peace Implementation Council also asked UNMIBH to take part in a major programme of legal reform under the coordination of the Office of the High Representative. As requested by the Security Council in resolution 1144 (1997) and after detailed discussions with the Office of the High Representative and other concerned agencies, I have submitted, in paragraphs 44 to 46 of the present report, proposals for a programme of court monitoring by UNMIBH. This is one part of the comprehensive legal reform programme being led by the Office of the High Representative. As UNMIBH becomes more actively involved in dealing with accusations of human rights violations by the police,

the urgency of the work of legal reform becomes increasingly evident. In my last report, I already noted my conviction that police and judicial reforms have to be carried out in an integrated way. I therefore believe that the Security Council should approve the required increase in resources for this task.

70. The present report highlights the wide range of activities being carried out by members of the United Nations family in Bosnia and Herzegovina. My Special Representative has initiated consultations with the United Nations agencies to ensure that their interests and concerns are reflected in her discussions with local political leaders and the leadership of the international community. In 1998, the United Nations agencies will give particular attention to refugee returns and measures to support them. In this connection, projects to strengthen civic society, build local democracy and promote respect for human rights will be given special attention. All agencies believe that justice is an important basis for stabilization and that, in this regard, the work of the International Tribunal, the accounting for missing persons and UNMIBH's work on legal reform are important components of an overall strategy.

Annex

Composition of the International Police Task Force as at 4 March 1998[a]

Argentina	43
Austria	39
Bangladesh	30
Bulgaria	41
Canada	30
Chile	31
Denmark	39
Egypt	34
Estonia	9
Fiji	7
Finland	21
France	120
Germany	164
Ghana	86
Greece	13
Hungary	36
Iceland	3
India	142
Indonesia	18
Ireland	35
Italy	23
Jordan	155
Kenya	7
Malaysia	46
Nepal	42
Netherlands	55
Nigeria	19
Norway	24
Pakistan	94
Poland	42
Portugal	61
Russian Federation	31
Senegal	32
Spain	54
Sweden	50
Switzerland	6
Thailand	3
Tunisia	3
Turkey	27
Ukraine	33
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	60
United States of America	203
Total	2 011

[a] The number of civilian police monitors varies owing to rotations.

UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

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S/1998/227/Corr.1
26 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Corrigendum

Paragraph 9

(a) Fourth line

For IPTF Trust Fund for Restructuring. read Trust Fund for the police assistance programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(b) Last line

For IPTF Trust Fund. read Trust Fund for the police assistance programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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30 March 1998

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Addendum

1. In paragraph 67 of my report to the Security Council dated 12 March 1998 (S/1998/227), I recommended that the Council approve the increase in resources required for the proposals outlined in paragraphs 37 to 43 of the report.

2. It is estimated that the costs associated with the additional deployment of 30 International Police Task Force (IPTF) monitors in the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) for a period of 3 months would be approximately $0.9 million. It is also estimated that the costs associated with a programme of court monitoring by UNMIBH, referred to in paragraphs 44 to 46 of the report, for a period of three months would be approximately $1.1 million.

3. Should the Security Council decide to deploy additional police monitors, I would then seek the additional resources required from the General Assembly. A breakdown of the estimated financial requirements is provided by main category of expenditure, for information purposes, in the annex to the present addendum.

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Annex

Cost estimates for the deployment of additional International Police Task Force monitors and civilian personnel to the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a three-month period

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Specialized training	Court monitoring	Total
Military personnel costs	3	-	3
Civilian personnel costs[a]	455	555	1 010
Premises/accommodation	15	10	25
Infrastructure repairs	-	-	-
Transport operations	140	120	260
Air operations	-	-	-
Naval operations	-	-	-
Communications	120	110	230
Other equipment	157	155	312
Supplies and services	-	-	-
Election-related supplies and services	-	-	-
Public information programmes	-	-	-
Training programmes	-	-	-
Mine-clearing programmes	-	-	-
Assistance for disarmament	-	-	-
Air and surface freight	-	-	-
United Nations Logistics Base	-	-	-
Support account for peacekeeping operations	-	-	-
Staff assessment	10	130	140
Total	900	1 080	1 980

[a] Includes provision for 30 civilian police and 15 language assistants for the specialized training and 26 Professional staff and 25 language assistants for the court monitoring programme.

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Security Council

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S/1998/228
13 March 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 13 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CAMEROON TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you, herewith, the text of the communiqué issued on 8 March 1998 by the Cameroonian Government in response to recent statements made by the Nigerian authorities concerning the situation in the Bakassi peninsula.

"The Cameroonian Government wishes to state that the allegations of the Nigerian authorities to the effect that Cameroon is in the process of massing troops in preparation for a military attack on Bakassi are completely unfounded and are merely a further attempt to justify the continuing aggression and armed escalation which that aggressor country is perpetually engaging in in the area.

"In fact, in its frontier dispute with Nigeria, Cameroon has always chosen the path of peaceful settlement in accordance with international law.

"That is why it referred the matter to the International Court of Justice in The Hague; on 15 March 1996, the latter decreed protective measures to be observed by the two parties and it has just opened, on 2 March 1998, the oral arguments on the preliminary objections raised by Nigeria regarding the admissibility of the case and the competence of the court.

"Accordingly, Cameroon vigorously protests the effort Nigeria is making to manipulate international public opinion and it condemns any attempt to justify further Nigerian aggression in the field.

"Cameroon again invites Nigeria to respect the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of that of the Organization of African Unity, as is proper, and the protective measures decreed by the International Court of Justice in The Hague so that peace may reign in Bakassi and all along the shared frontier before, during and after the final verdict which the international court will shortly pronounce."

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Martin BELINGA EBOUTOU
Permanent Representative

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Security Council

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A/53/82
S/1998/229
13 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Item 113 (b) of the preliminary list*
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 12 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement issued by the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 11 March 1998 concerning the situation in Kosovo and Metohija.

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, under item 113 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/53/50.

98-06454 (E) 130398

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ANNEX

Statement issued by the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 11 March 1998

At its meeting today, chaired by Prime Minister Dr. Radoje Kontic, the Federal Government considered the statement of the Ministerial Meeting of the Contact Group held in London on 9 March 1998.

While it appreciates the condemnation of separatism and terrorism in the statement of the Contact Group, the Federal Government does not accept the attempts to internationalize any internal question of the Republic of Serbia or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Federal Government considers that there is no basis for that either in the international legal system or in international practice.

What is at stake is interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign and independent country. The Federal Government points out that terrorism is an evil in Europe and the world and that it is dangerous to apply double standards to it. It is the legitimate right and obligation of every country to oppose energetically the phenomenon of terrorism as a method of achieving political goals. The eradication of terrorism requires a clear, unequivocal condemnation of that evil by all elements, in particular by the responsible forces and leaders of the members of the Albanian national minority.

The Federal Government considers that dealing with purely internal questions of a country at international meetings and threats to introduce measures of pressure constitute a flagrant violation of the international legal system and an attempt to create a precedent with unforeseeable consequences for international relations.

Respecting as it does all human and minority rights and standards established by the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Document 1992 and the Charter of Paris, as well as the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Federal Government considers that these documents provide a framework for the solution of all questions in Kosovo and Metohija through dialogue, by political means, within the constitutional system of the Republic of Serbia.

To that end, the Federal Government fully supports the positions of the Government of the Republic of Serbia presented in its statement of 10 March 1998 (S/1998/225, annex) and the call for an open dialogue aimed at finding solutions to all concrete questions.

The Federal Government also fully supports the policy, measures and efforts of the Republic of Serbia aimed at achieving stable social development in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija under the conditions of tolerance and the full equality of all citizens, irrespective of nationality and religious affiliation, which is the basis of every democratic, multi-ethnic society.

The Federal Government confirms also on this occasion its readiness to cooperate with the international community on the basis of full equality, with respect for the legitimate interests, sovereignty, territorial integrity and the constitutional and legal system of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in accordance with the international legal system.

The Federal Government calls upon all responsible international actors to refrain from all steps or acts which lend encouragement to the separatist elements in Kosovo and Metohija, in particular from taking any unfounded measures contrary to the recognized constructive policy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a constituent of lasting peace, stability and good-neighbourliness in this part of Europe.

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General Assembly
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A/53/83
S/1998/230
13 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Item 113 (b) of the preliminary list*
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 12 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement issued by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on 11 March 1998 on the appointment of its negotiators to the talks with the representatives of the Albanian national minority of Kosovo and Metohija.

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly under item 113 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/53/50.

98-06460 (E) 130398

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Annex

Statement issued by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on 11 March 1998

The Serbian Government, in keeping with its decision of 10 March 1998, has appointed its representatives to the talks with the leaders of ethnic Albanian parties and associations, public figures from (Serbia's southern province of) Kosovo-Metohija and all persons considered as representatives of the Albanian national minority, in order to give an impetus to political processes and to resolving specific issues vital to the inhabitants of the province.

The Serbian Government will be represented by Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Ratko Markovic and ministers Ratomir Vico, Andrea Milosavljevic and Ivan Sedlak.

The Government reiterates it readiness to use dialogue and political means to resolve all issues regarding the exercise of human and civil rights of all citizens in Kosovo-Metohija, as well as all issues regarding faster economic and cultural development in line with Serbia's Constitution, European and international standards, the principles of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Charter of Paris, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles contained in the Council of Europe Framework Convention on minority protection.

The Serbian Government urges all parliamentary parties to appoint one representative each for participation in the talks in order to ensure a unified approach of the Serbian Parliament to resolving the Kosovo-Metohija issues.

Serbian Government representatives and representatives of the Albanian national minority will initiate open and public talks in government offices in Pristina on Thursday, 12 March 1998.

The Serbian Government considers this statement as a public invitation to the talks in Pristina on Thursday.

UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/231
13 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Draft resolution

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 1125 (1997) of 6 August 1997, 1136 (1997) of 6 November 1997 and 1152 (1998) of 5 February 1998,

Taking note of the report dated 10 March 1998 (S/1998/221) to the Security Council by the International Committee for the follow-up of the Bangui Agreements pursuant to resolution 1152 (1998),

Taking note also of the letter dated 11 March 1998 from the President of the Central African Republic to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/219, annex) and of the letter dated 13 March 1998 to the President of the Security Council from the President of Gabon, on behalf of the members of the International Committee for the follow-up of the Bangui Agreements (S/1998/233, annex),

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 23 February 1998 (S/1998/148) submitted to the Council in accordance with resolution 1152 (1998),

Expressing its appreciation for the neutral and impartial way in which the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) has carried out its mandate, in close cooperation with the Central African authorities and noting with satisfaction that MISAB has contributed significantly to stabilizing the situation in the Central African Republic, in particular through the supervision of the surrendering of arms,

Noting that the States participating in MISAB and the Central African Republic have decided to extend the mandate of MISAB until 15 April 1998 in order to ensure a smooth transition to the prospective deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation (S/1998/219, annex),

Stressing the importance of regional stability and in this context fully supporting the efforts of the International Mediation Committee established by the nineteenth Summit of the Heads of State and Governments of France and Africa and by the members of the International Committee for the follow-up of the Bangui Agreements,

Stressing also the need for all signatories to the Bangui Agreements to continue to cooperate fully in respecting and implementing these Agreements,

Determining that the situation in the Central African Republic continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region,

1. Welcomes the efforts made by the Member States participating in MISAB and by those States providing support to them, and their readiness to maintain these efforts;

2. Urges the Government of the Central African Republic to continue to fulfil the commitments expressed in the letter of 8 January 1998 to the Secretary-General from the President of the Central African Republic (S/1998/61, annex) and calls upon the parties in the Central African Republic to complete the implementation of the provisions of the Bangui Agreements and to implement the conclusions of the National Reconciliation Conference (S/1998/219, appendix);

3. Approves the continued conduct by Member States participating in MISAB of the operation in a neutral and impartial way to achieve its objective as set out in paragraph 2 of resolution 1125 (1997);

4. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, authorizes the Member States participating in MISAB and those States providing logistical support to ensure security and freedom of movement of their personnel;

5. Decides that the authorization referred to in paragraph 4 above will be extended until 27 March 1998;

6. Recalls that the expenses and logistical support for MISAB will be borne on a voluntary basis in accordance with article 11 of the mandate of MISAB, and encourages Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund for the Central African Republic;

7. Affirms that it will take a decision by 27 March 1998 on the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General of 23 February 1998;

8. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

UNITED
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Security Council

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GENERAL

S/1998/232
16 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Kenya and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolution 1132 (1997) of 8 October 1997 and the relevant statements of its President,

Taking note of the letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations to the President of the Security Council of 9 March 1998 (S/1998/215),

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Welcomes the return to Sierra Leone of its democratically elected President on 10 March 1998;

2. Decides to terminate, with immediate effect, the prohibitions on the sale or supply to Sierra Leone of petroleum and petroleum products referred to in paragraph 6 of resolution 1132 (1997);

3. Welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to make proposals concerning the role of the United Nations and its future presence in Sierra Leone;

4. Decides to review the other prohibitions referred to in resolution 1132 (1997) in accordance with paragraph 17 of that resolution and in the light of developments and further discussion with the Government of Sierra Leone;

5. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

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LETTER DATED 13 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GABON TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter from His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic.

(Signed) Denis DANGUE REWAKA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 13 March 1998 from the President of Gabon addressed to the President of the Security Council

During a solemn ceremony which has just taken place in Bangui, Central African Republic, I had the satisfaction, in my capacity as mediator and representative of the heads of State who were given an express mandate in December 1996 by the France-Africa Conference in Ouagadougou, of presiding over the signing of the National Reconciliation Pact by the various sectors of the population of the Central African Republic and by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Ange-Félix Patassé (see S/1998/219).

We all welcome this peaceful settlement of a conflict which was threatening to have a severe impact on the future of the subregion of Central Africa.

On behalf of the countries participating in the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB), I join all the African heads of State who were particularly responsive to the crisis in the Central African Republic in extending support to the recommendations made by Mr. Kofi Annan in his report on the situation in the Republic (S/1998/148 and Add.1).

The launching, as soon as possible, of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic cannot fail to play a role in guaranteeing the stability of the National Reconciliation Pact which has just been signed.

With that in mind, I think that in the meantime it will be necessary for the current mandate of MISAB to be extended until 15 April 1998. Accordingly, it would be good if the Security Council agreed to renew its approval for the conduct of that operation and to extend the authorization granted in resolution 1152 (1998).

I thank you in advance for the measures to be taken to that end, and I can assure you, for our part, that we will give our full support to all measures aimed at maintaining a climate of stability, progress and peace in our subregion and on the African continent.

(Signed) El Hadj Omar BONGO